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CHRIST, SIN AND REDEMPTION

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BY

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TO
MY WIFE

54

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Prologue

THIS little book is the expression of an attempt to understand the significance of Redemption and of the place of Christ in the Divine Forgiveness and in the saving of the Soul. It does not view Redemption on the scale of history, but on the scale of individual experience. It is not a history of the Doctrine of Redemption, nor even of Redemption itself.

The book consists of two parts. The First Part is expository and aims at understanding what Our Lord Himself and His two great Disciples, Paul and the writer of the Fourth Gospel, mean by Redemption. This part may be considered as a preparatory discipline, for, after our own heart, there is no truer guide to the meaning of Redemption than the New Testament. The discipline is incomplete, for it does not include all the New Testament writings. Limits of space forbade a fuller treatment. But this fuller treatment is not perhaps, for our present purpose, altogether necessary. What is lacking to full expository treatment can be more adequately supplied out

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of the works which deal with the New Testament and its theology. Nor would a complete exposition of the writings of the New Testament have altered the guiding ideas which we have obtained from Our Lord's teaching and that of Paul and John for the understanding of Redemption.

The Second Part deals with Sin, Repentance and Forgiveness (what might be called the Psychology of Redemption), the place of Christ and of the Community or Church in the redemptive process, and finally is deduced the Conception of God that issues out of the individual and communal experience of Redemption. This Second Part may be said to have two sources, one is the study of the New Testament, the other is personal experience. *Primâ facie* the two parts may seem to have little direct relation to one another, but it is safe to say that the Second Part would have been very different, if indeed it could ever have been written, apart from truth learnt through the New Testament.

The aim of the book is practical. And the aim will be achieved if one is confirmed in his belief of the Reality of Redemption in Christ, or another is helped to the joy and peace of the Redeemed Life.

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The imperfections are obvious enough, but neither for them nor for the substance of the book do I apologize. We do not apologize for conviction; we assert it. And perhaps the reader will get most out of this book and be fairest to the writer, if he takes it as an expression, imperfect enough, of sure and assertive conviction.

I have to thank the proprietors of *The Expository Times* for their kind permission to re-publish pp. 13-23.

PART I

I. The Testimony of Jesus concerning Sin and Redemption

I. SIN

JESUS entered upon His ministry with the single purpose of saving the sinner. The intensity of this purpose is seen in the fact that, in its pursuit, He broke the Law, incurred the opposition of religious leaders and political authorities, and, finally, surrendered His life to a shameful death. Plainly He regarded the case of the sinner as serious in the extreme. What was then, in His eyes, this sin from which man so much needed to be saved? What was the condition of the sinner from which, at any cost, He was willing to save him?

As far as we know, Jesus never attempted any systematic treatment of sin. He treats sin practically, as a fact, and never speaks of "sin" (*ἁμαρτία*) in the singular, but always of "sins" (*ἁμαρτίαι*) in the plural. Evidently He had no speculative interest in the subject. His interest in the sinner was practical and personal, but, nevertheless, perhaps partly on this account, He gives us what I believe to be the

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last word on the meaning of sin and the condition of the sinful.

A brief résumé of His treatment of sins will reveal the completeness and penetration of His conception.

(a) To Jesus, as to the Jew of His day, 'Sin was the transgression of the law.' Here Jesus is formally on Jewish ground, but His attitude to the Law and His interpretation carry Him into a much wider country. To the Jew, the Law meant Moses with the endless rabbinic deductions—'the traditions of men'; from these deductions Jesus, at times, appealed to the letter of the Mosaic law, and, at times, He appealed from the Mosaic law to its moral spirit and human intention. It does not seem to be wide of the mark to say that to Jesus single-hearted love to God and loving one's neighbour as oneself, that is, regarding every man, self and neighbour, as an end of highest value, comprise the Law. At any rate, Love to God and Love to man are the two great commandments, and any conduct or feeling that falls short of their fulfilment is transgression of the Law, and, as such, is sin. In this connection we have to remind ourselves of the emphasis of Jesus on the inwardness of sin. Not merely the evil

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act, but the evil desire is a transgression of the Law of love. It may be perfectly true that some of the Rabbis made this emphasis, but the emphasis is there with Jesus and is consistent with His strong insistence upon personal sincerity. And so to Him any and every transgression, in act or in feeling, of the Law of Love with its Godward and manward relation, was sin.

(*b*) Jesus condemns the love of money as sinful. The actual sin is here an over-attachment to Mammon, to that which is not-God and stands over against God as His opposite: this over-attachment creates a division in the moral personality and makes single-hearted love to God impossible. The over-anxious spirit is, for the same reason, condemned. Such a spirit is attached to this world and its cares, and cannot be completely attached to God; it cannot be single in its love of God. Indeed, any attachment which interferes with whole-hearted devotion to God is sinful and so 'He that loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.'

(*c*) Another sin condemned by Jesus is that of moral barrenness, strikingly exhibited in the cursing of the barren fig-tree, in Luke's parable (xiii. 6-9), and in the man of one talent (cf. also Matt. vii. 21). Life that is spiritually barren

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fails to give God His due; it deprives Him of the fruit of the tree of His own planting and care.

(*d*) Other sins condemned are (i) hypocrisy, which may be conscious and in which pious and charitable deeds are performed for the sake of reputation, or unconscious—probably the commoner form of the sin of hypocrisy—in which there is an honouring with the lips without any genuine love of God, and (ii) inhumanity, which directly breaks the second commandment. In both these sins, outwardly very different, the essence is the same, a deep-seated egoism, which in hypocrisy is blind and stupid—an over-assertion of self, or over-devotion to one's private interests (the Priest and the Levite), which makes whole-hearted devotion to God impossible.

(*e*) Another sin specially condemned by Jesus which ought to be mentioned, and which has been named "sin to the second power," is the sin of rejection of Himself and His message (Matt. xi. 20-24). This sin was the wilful rejection of the mercy and love of God.

Now, if we ask what is the common element in these particular instances—the common essence of them all—the answer is not difficult. In all the instances there is a departure from God, from His Law and Love, from the sphere and quality

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of His Life (the Prodigal). Sin may be lawless or barren or self-willed, any one of these aspects may be prominent, but in all its forms and instances it involves a separation from the Divine Father. That to Jesus is the essence of sin and its most serious feature.

But sin which, in its essence, is an estrangement from God does not only affect man, it involves God. Sins, according to Jesus, are debts, due to God, offences against Him, and the sinner is a personal loss to God. This fact shows that Jesus in His saving of the sinner must have realized that He was doing something for God as well as for man. His saving work had a relation to God, however we may formulate the relation. His saving purpose and work were according to God's will, and must in that will find their final purpose and justification.

Sin then has meaning and consequence both for God and man. The consequences for man are twofold: (i) consequences that are immediate and direct, and (ii) consequences that are eschatological. The first consequences are implicit in the sin; they are the inevitable results of sinning. If a man is attached to Mammon, he will become mammonized, if we may use the term. 'Where his heart is, there will his

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treasure be also.' Attachment to anything that is not-God makes the sinner share in that part of not-God to which he is attached. The sinner becomes selfish and material. Jesus, as far as we know, never attempted a solution of the relation of sin and suffering, but the two were in His mind intimately connected. The Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, were not exceptional sinners, but their fate was a warning to those who would not repent. In combating sin and disease He feels that He is fighting the same foe. In healing disease He is attacking sin in its outer works. The popular mind did not always see that His objective was past the outer works to the citadel of sin, and it may have been that blindness which caused His reserve in His healing work. He was not a miracle-worker, but a Saviour of sinners. For Him sin meant suffering and suffering implied sin. The misery of the Prodigal was inevitably involved in his first act of self-will.

But there are future or eschatological consequences. Sin, unrepented of, will shut the sinner out of the Kingdom; he will be cast into 'the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth,' into 'an eternal fire prepared

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for the Devil and his angels.' Jesus speaks of the final destiny of the sinful in figures of speech, and from these we have no right to form dogmatic statements of the everlasting punishment or of the personal annihilation of the sinner. All we are justified in saying is, that to Jesus persistence in sin will have consequences beyond those which are immediate and consequences of the gravest order.

There are two questions with which theology has been much concerned: (i) the origin of sin, and (ii) its universality. With these speculative questions Jesus does not seem to have been greatly concerned. There is, however, one illuminating word on the origin of sin—'That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of man, evil thoughts do proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness—all these proceed from within and defile the man.' True, He speaks of offences or traps (σκάνδαλα) which may be in ourselves, or enter into us from others and occasion sin, but these offences are very much of the nature of *fomes peccati*, they are the occasions or provide the conditions of sin, they are not its cause,

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which is man himself. The Devil and his temptations, in the same way, belong to the category of occasion, not to that of cause. Nor does Jesus lend any countenance to the view that ignorance is the cause of sin. Men may sin in ignorance, but they are none the less sinners and need the Divine forgiveness. Man is the real cause. Sin arises out of the self.

As to the universality of sin, Jesus attempts no proof of this position. He simply treats all men as sinners. 'Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?' 'He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone.' The sinner was not to Him a member of a special class of society. The respectable citizen and the religious guide are, outward appearances removed, sinful like the publican and the woman of evil life. When a man has done his duty, he is still a servant, still a debtor to God and therefore sinful. The outcaste, the reputable and the dutiful are all sinful and in need of salvation.

One last fact requires to be mentioned, and that is, that Jesus never regarded sin apart from forgiveness, never the sinner apart from the saving love of God. That is why sin with Jesus does not remain an irrational element or surd

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in the scheme of things, as it does to every intellectual interpretation that leaves forgiveness out of account. Jesus is never driven to despair of the sinner and his sin. He does not despise nor simply pity, as we so often do, the sinner. To Him the sinner is neither a weak fool nor a bad fool. He is, pre-eminently, the subject of Divine, omnipotent, saving power.

From this consideration then of Jesus' treatment of sin we draw the following conclusions:

(i) Sin, in all its manifestations, is a separation from God, the loving Father of men. That is its essence. Sin then only exists in that order where God is.

(ii) This separation involves the most serious consequences. It is a personal loss to God; it impairs the Divine joy and beatitude (Luke xv). It is also a loss to man; it robs him inevitably and immediately of communion with God, and of his share in the Divine beatitude, it detaches him from a higher order which is abiding, and attaches him to a lower which passeth away. Sin, persisted in, has the direst consequences. We can never cite Jesus in the interests of a shallow optimism or a shallow doctrine of healthy-mindedness which ignores the terrible reality of sin and sin's consequences.

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(iii) Man is the cause of his sin. The cause of sin can never be resolved into its conditions. When these are stated most completely and most penetratingly, something still remains—the cause, which is man himself. This position is corroborated by man's conscience when it is faithful and true.

(iv) Jesus regarded all men as sinful. We do not know how He came to this judgment. The eye that could pierce beneath the outward seeming to the actual reality may have played its part. The judgment may have been a kind of moral intuition from His conception of God. If God is essentially and universally a forgiving and redeeming God, then every man must be a sinner for the relation between God and man to have reality. Perhaps, and this seems most likely, the judgment was due directly to His God-consciousness. Whatever may have been the process by which the judgment was obtained, the historical fact remains. Jesus treats men on the basis of their sinfulness.

(v) Sin can be forgiven. Man can be redeemed. That saves sin from remaining an irrational element in life and the scheme of things. It saves man from the despair and doom of sin.

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These conclusions may be very inadequately stated. They may raise further questions. The conviction remains, however, that these conclusions are the fundamental facts regarding sin, from which speculation on the subject can never depart without going astray. Further, that it is doubtful if we can or if we need get beyond them, When we want to know the truth about sin, we shall leave the bewilderments of the philosopher and speculative theologian to learn the truth as it is in Jesus.

II. REDEMPTION

WE have summarized the teaching of Jesus upon Sin, but we must remember that the purpose of Jesus was not to discuss the meaning and different aspects of Sin, but to redeem the sinner. His absorbing passion was to end the personal estrangement between any individual and God—an estrangement which meant grief and loss to God and misery and death to man—and to create again communion between him and God, from which would issue righteous and happy life.

The question which is now before our mind is, What did Jesus mean by Redemption? What,

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according to Him, were its nature, causes and conditions ?

As far as we know, Jesus never made any psychological or speculative exposition of Redemption. His concern was practical, the redeeming of man. But this is no disadvantage in dealing with the question now before us, for it is in the practical purposes of a life that we discover what, for that life, is truth—what is really thought and believed. Accordingly, we shall best understand the mind of Jesus on the subject of Redemption by sympathetic observation of His method in carrying out His great purpose.

First, then, Jesus sought to redeem men by preaching, by the simple declaration of the mind and attitude of God, as He knew them, to sinful men. He declared God to be a forgiving God; that God forgives men their apostasy from His will and love. That truth had been already preached by prophet and psalmist. No Jew in Christ's day required to be told that God forgives sin. But Jesus "fulfilled" the preaching of psalmist and prophet, and changed radically the doctrine of forgiveness as it was taught by the religious leaders in His own day. There was a new and original note in His preach-

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ing, for He preached that the forgiveness of sins was the free gift of God.

According to the Jewish teaching in our Lord's day on this subject, a sinner or an outcaste could not be immediately and freely forgiven. He would have to merit the divine forgiveness. But Jesus swept aside the whole idea of meriting God's forgiveness. 'Thy sins are forgiven thee' He said to the sick of the palsy, and, in all probability, it was the freeness with which the forgiveness was pronounced to the miserable outcaste that raised the indignation of the Pharisees. It may be quite true that the Jewish conception, in the first century, of God's relation to the Israelite was very much the same as in the Psalter. God is just and righteous. He punishes as well as rewards; but His justice is surpassed by His compassion. And if, in repentance, man will (in the familiar Rabbinic simile) advance towards Him an inch God will run to meet him an ell. But that 'inch' really meant works, some acceptance, at least, of the yoke of the Law. Jesus abolished that 'inch.' And in moral reality that inch was infinitely more than an inch; to abolish it was one of those things which, without God, was impossible.

We can well believe that here was a new

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Gospel to a morally disfranchised Israelite. Burdened and heavy-laden, weakened in will and crushed in spirit, how could he fulfil the least part of the law? His was the despair of utter moral impotence; even on the generous terms offered of an inch, he could not be forgiven and redeemed. But Jesus came to him with the message that God does not put even his most sinful children on short probation, with the promise of forgiveness at the end of it. He does not demand what they cannot give. As far as God is concerned, Thy sins are already forgiven thee.

But that was not all. There was with Jesus a new emphasis on what we may call the substance of forgiveness. According to the Jewish conception, when God forgave an Israelite his sin, He admitted him back to the Divine favour and to the privileges of Abraham's children; but with Jesus, when God forgives, He does not simply bestow divine favours or restore lost privilege, He gives Himself and binds up the personal breach which sinning has caused. In forgiveness, God returns into the life of the sinner, bringing righteousness and beatitude.

This new emphasis Jesus presented in the immortal story of the Prodigal Son. The for-

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givenness in that story does not consist in the bestowal of the best clothes and the ring, nor in the killing of the fatted calf. These are but symbols, real symbols we may say, but the real forgiveness is in this, that, once again, the sinner is a son in the paternal home. He and the Father are again one. The original cause of all the sin and misery, the separation of the son from his Father, is ended.

In the story of the Prodigal, Jesus revealed the substantial meaning of forgiveness as the personal return of God into the sinner's life. But He did this in yet more striking manner by His own personal attitude to the sinner. He ate with him and made friends with him, while those who sat in Moses' seat and were the representatives of God to the people did not do that kind of thing. He made no preliminary conditions in His association with His fellows; not even that of moral respectability. He offered them His friendship without money or price of any sort. That was a new thing in the moral experience of Israel. It was a new revelation of the meaning of forgiving love.

It is easy to misconceive the action and attitude of Jesus towards the sinful. We may think of it as an easy indulgence of human sin

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and weakness, to which most of us are prone, counting it to ourselves for righteousness. But the more truly righteous a man is, the less indulgent is he to sinful action; it is the remembrance of sin that stops the fountain of moral indignation and unseals that of easy condonation. One of the most remarkable features in the life of Jesus was His abhorrence of all forms of sinning along with His love of, and His friendship with the sinner. Nor can the antithesis be resolved by saying that He hated the sin and loved the sinner, for sin does not exist apart from the sinner, it is truly a personal part of him. This attitude of Jesus to the sinner was a paradox of grace. He abhorred sinfulness—persons sinning—and yet He made friends with sinning persons. And, strange to say, He never showed the slightest trace of fear or suspicion of Himself. So majestic in His holiness, so impregnable in His righteousness, so sure of Himself and yet so fond of the company of sinners. His attitude must have surprised and bewildered even those who found in it new faith and life. But in this attitude He was revealing the attitude of God to the sinner and He knew what He was doing.

The divine forgiveness which Jesus preached was due to the infinite mercy of God, and is

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inexhaustible. Human forgiveness, said Jesus, ought not to be a question of how many times; if it is that, it is not like God's: only when it is until seventy times seven, outside the limits of all calculation, is it, in nature, like God's. And God's mercy is towards all men (Matt. v, 45). God is willing to forgive the worst sinner.

But free, personal and universal as the forgiveness of God is, it is not without its conditions. The sinner must have faith and he must repent. And faith with Jesus implies felt need and desire. The sinner wants to be righteous; he desires to return to God; he believes God is willing and able to redeem. Repentance is removal, on the sinner's part, of those obstacles which bar the return of God into his life—the breaking of those attachments to the world and selfish satisfaction which prevent his union or reunion with God.

These conditions, which the sinner has to fulfil, are not of the nature of merits. Man has not, and never can have, according to Jesus, merit towards God. When he has done his utmost to please God, he is still God's debtor. Faith, the feeling of need, the turning in trembling confidence to a stronger power for help, plainly has nothing meritorious about it; and it is the same with repentance, the removal of those

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attachments to the world which have been preventing God from entering into His due. Still less can faith and repentance be reckoned as, in any sense, meritorious when we remember that they are due to the gracious revelation and working of the divine love upon the sinner's heart. The conditions, especially repentance, may seem severe, but they need not be full-orbed for the love of God to turn or return in forgiveness to the sinner; be they small as a grain of mustard seed, so long as they are sincere, it is enough.

Faith and Repentance are morally and psychologically knit together; they are not two separate acts, but two aspects of one indivisible, personal action, the turning from self and the world to God. And they are absolute; there is only one strait gate that leads to redemption and life; and the gate is there, in God's mercy, to 'whosoever will.'

But in seeking to redeem the sinner, Jesus did not only preach the Gospel of Forgiveness. He also preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. As is well known, the idea of the Kingdom in the teaching of Jesus has been the subject of much critical discussion. Into this discussion, which has been carried on too much within the limits of purely literary criticism, it is not needful to

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enter. To Jesus, the Kingdom was God's Kingdom; it was God's promise and His gift alone. It had come already in that small band of men amongst whom Jesus was Master. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is in your midst,' says Jesus to the Pharisees. It would come in the future with the seals of an Omnipotent Heaven upon it. The locality of the Kingdom is in Heaven and on earth.

What is the Kingdom in its real nature? It is the reign of God in men's hearts and lives; it is the will of God being done in Heaven or on earth. And so, when and where men repent, when and where they break away from the bondage of sense and selfishness, when and where they turn to God with the simple, fearless trust of ideal childhood, when and where they have an unaffected goodness and a righteousness that is spontaneous and unconscious, of the spirit and not of the letter like that of the Scribes and Pharisees—there is the Kingdom. And the Kingdom is with men who will sacrifice every selfish and apparently legitimate interest—even to the cutting off a hand or the plucking out an eye—for the sake of whole-hearted service to God; it is with men who pray for the highest good of their enemies, or who delight to bestow

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benefit without return; it is with men, too, who seek and search long for things of true value, and who, out of the treasure-house of God, bring forth what is as old as the eternal hills and as fresh and glad as a day in spring; it is with men who make noble venture and build fair citadels, who count the cost and are willing to pay it, with men and women who are always ready and expectant for the breaking forth of new and more glorious life and opportunity. Poverty and obscurity and a sinful past are no barriers to entrance into the Kingdom. To the poor, the sad and the sinful the Kingdom comes as a new hope and reality that compensate for every earthly limitation, and redeem life to righteousness, beauty and joy. The entrance into the Kingdom is strait. It is through the door of faith. Faith, with Jesus, is the great initial victory that wins all things. Faith that emerges in a feeling of utter need and dependence, and that resolves to take God at His word, in childlike simplicity and with all egoistic pride of intellect and character cast aside, is the one, only, absolute condition. And Faith is the Repentance that abandons all the vain desires and satisfactions, the pleasures, the wealth, the pride of life and the ceaseless business which we call our duty, and

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that flings the naked soul upon God. In Repentance, we have to leave *things*, and cast ourselves on Spirit.

Are the conditions severe, impossible? They certainly seem so when we think of them as conditions which *we* have to fulfil, and we feel impelled to say with the disciples, 'Who then can be saved?' But Jesus told His disciples not to look at the conditions, but to look to God, and when men keep their eyes fixed upon God, their despair vanishes, their courage arises, they become violent and take the Kingdom by storm.

Faith, repentance, the heart of a little child, a righteousness exceeding that of Scribe and Pharisee, a loving of our enemy, a loving of God with all one's heart and soul and mind, that is, the complete dedication of the whole of life to the love of God and man, is the practical ethic of the Kingdom. And this ethic is the yoke which the aspirant to entrance into the Kingdom has to bear, but it is a yoke that is easy, for to bear it God gives His own omnipotent strength. God does not, according to Jesus, present men with an outline or frame of the Kingdom and bid them to fill in the picture out of their own poor powers of moral artistry. He does not hew out a perfect cistern and bid men to fill it; He gives

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to men the water of life. The Kingdom with its ethic and beatitude is, from start to finish, the gift of God.

Jesus then sought to redeem men by preaching the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Kingdom. The redeemed life is begun in forgiveness; it is continued in the Kingdom. But Jesus, as has been already said, did not confine Himself to the method of preaching. He ate and drank with the sinful; He began by collecting a band of disciples. He called this one and the other to come and follow Him. He healed the sick and, by so doing, showed His sympathy for them. He did not wait till the sinner and fallen met Him in the way, but He went forth to meet and redeem them. His whole manner betrays a deep-seated desire to get into living communion with His fellows—to create a personal unity between them and Himself. He actually speaks of a union between Himself and others that is deeper than any tie of blood and kinship. And He says, in the spirit and word of the Divine Wisdom, ‘Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.’ He sought to make Himself at one with men, to give them Himself.

And Jesus shows by this personal method

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that He regarded Himself as supremely necessary for His own Gospel of Forgiveness and the Kingdom. He assumes Himself a central place in His preaching, and is Himself His own Gospel. If men will abandon all and follow Him, theirs is the Kingdom and eternal life—by following after Him they are redeemed. He is Himself God's gift to men, their redemption and salvation. To be redeemed is to join oneself to Jesus and His cause, not in any formal way, for not every one that says to Him, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but to identify oneself with Him in fearless trust of God's love, in the saving of men from their lower selves, in the determined search for the real values of life, in the finding of beauty in the flowers of the field and in the housewife's kitchen, in the willingness to give all, even life itself, for the sake of the Great Cause, in living by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God, in this personal, living union with Jesus, in this identity of mind and heart, the sinner is redeemed.

Jesus desired to do something for men which cannot be done by preaching alone, however gracious the message and however wonderful the preacher. He desired to give men Himself; He was Himself His own message, and when the

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preacher's Life is his message, his purpose will require more than preaching for its realization. 'Jesus is a prophet, and, unlike the Scribes, He does not talk about Himself' (Dr. Lake), 'He does not talk about Himself'; wisely perhaps, even though He felt Himself to be the Redeemer and the very Redemption of men. But though He did not *talk* much about Himself as the divinely ordained Redeemer, nevertheless He wanted men to know and to realize in their own experience, that He Himself was their Redeemer and their Life. Jesus had something to give to men which cannot be given by preaching, or even by the doing of mighty works, and He wanted men to know this, and so, in every possible human way, He made Himself one with them. When He ate with publicans and sinners He was doing something more than sitting with them at table, He was giving to them the Bread and Wine of Life.

And, in some way, Jesus seems to have tried through the acts of eating and drinking to symbolize His purpose and to convey it to the hearts of men. In the Feeding of the Five Thousand there was a mystery which, at the time, neither the crowd nor the disciples grasped. May not the mystery have been some symbolic

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or parabolic or even sacramental element, in and through which Jesus was attempting to express His great purpose? If so, the Fourth Evangelist in his spiritual interpretation of the miracle is historically true to the thought and action of Jesus on that occasion. May there not have been something of the same symbolizing, of the same sacramental idea expressed when Jesus sat at meat with Zacchæus or Simon the Pharisee? In the journey of the two disciples to Emmaus the Risen Christ was revealed "in the breaking of bread," which suggests, at least, that there were earlier experiences when Jesus became personally known for what He was and when His great purpose was revealed and fulfilled, as He ate and drank with men.

Dr. Goguel, in his book "L'Eucharistie," says with regard to the intention of Jesus at the Last Supper, "That which Jesus gives to His own, it is Himself, that is to say, the very essence of His thought, of His faith, of His heart. . . . He gives Himself, that is to say, He communicates His very self to them."

Dr. Cadman in "The Last Journey of Jesus" represents Jesus at the Last Supper as saying, "Very soon the movement of Repentance which I and you with me have striven to spread will

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cease to be. Now, therefore, lest the tragic crisis prove to be too much for your trust and hope in my message of the Kingdom, *I unite you to Myself*,¹ and do thereby make your place in the coming Kingdom as certain as I know My own to be."

If these two Doctors are right, Jesus in the Last Supper—through a meal—was symbolizing and more than symbolizing what was the conscious and supreme purpose of His life, namely, to draw men into closest fellowship with Himself. He was implanting in them the secret of His Life—through Death to Victory—implanting in them His very life, and so redeeming them from an earthly, sinful and dying existence to the very life of God, redeeming them from a dying world to an immortal home.

Jesus was to His own mind the forgiving love and the Kingdom; He was Himself the very gift of God by which men are redeemed. And so, by giving Himself through word and in action, in symbol and, at the last, in the great symbol and reality of the Cross, He sought to save sinners.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

What did Jesus think concerning His own death? Did He assign to it a special or

¹ Italics ours.

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unique or necessary place in His redemptive work ?

The answer to these questions has usually been given by referring to certain passages in the New Testament, in particular to the repeated prophecies which Jesus makes after the Confession Scene at Cæsarea Philippi, concerning His own death and the manner of it, to the Ransom passage (Mark x. 45, with its parallel, Matt. xx. 28), and to the words which Jesus used at the Last Supper. Into these passages (especially the two latter) have been read a burden of dogmatic interpretation, and even full-orbed theories of Atonement which the passages themselves simply cannot bear.

The Ransom passage, "For indeed the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many," read simply and naturally, seems to mean that Jesus has for the purpose of His life the service and redemption of others; this redemptive service will cost Him His life, and He is willing to pay the cost.

In the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper, He is certainly referring to His death, and He wishes to convey the thought that His coming death will not separate Him

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from His disciples; that as the last great act of giving Himself, it will rather bind them more closely to Himself; and that His death does not mean defeat, but victory and triumphant reunion.

It has been perhaps a mistake in trying to discover the conception which Jesus had of His own death—the thoughts with which He faced His fate in Jerusalem—to confine attention to the Ransom passage and the words and attitude of Jesus at the Last Supper. If we could construct the course of events on the journey of Jesus from the Confession scene at Cæsarea Philippi to the Crucifixion at Golgotha, and from the evidence at our disposal, divine the thoughts of Jesus, that is, if we could follow Him on that Via Dolorosa and sympathetically enter into His mind, we should know His ideas concerning His death. But the critical construction of the events is far from easy, and it requires more than critical construction to divine the mind of Him whose face was steadfastly set towards Jerusalem. But there are, I think, some certainties in the situation.

(i) By the time of the Confession scene, Jesus had accepted the inevitability of His death. The fate of John the Baptist had been a warning. Further, the opposition of the religious

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and political authorities which He had experienced in Galilee could only be intensified in Jerusalem. It is quite possible that the feeding of the five thousand was of the nature of a farewell banquet.

The view that has sometimes been put forward that Jesus did not go up to Jerusalem in the sure expectation of death, but in the hope of His own possible victory and of the triumph of His mission must be discarded. Mark tells us quite plainly that He spoke of His death with confidence (*παρρησία*) and He declared the necessity of His death again and again, though the records do not make plain what He regarded would be the issue on which He would be put to death.

(ii) Jesus regarded His death as of high redemptive value. He thought of His death as the pathway to victory. He would succeed in Jerusalem, but it would be at the cost of His life.

(iii) Behind and within the historical conditions which made the death a certainty, there was for Jesus a higher necessity, the will of His Father. The cup of suffering and death (however it came and whosoever the hand that presented it) was really His Father's gift to Him. In going to Jerusalem to give His life a ransom for many He was doing His Father's will. And for Jesus His Father's will for Him had a very

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definite content and purpose; His Father's will was, that He should redeem the fallen and the sinful. And that will had entered into His personality and was the purpose of His life. In carrying out the ministry of redemption that was unto death, He was fulfilling God's own ministry; through Him, and through His suffering and death, God was redeeming the world. He would not go to the Cross alone.

This idea of the unity of God with Him in all His work was deep and persistent in the mind of Jesus. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son the suffering of God is suggested, and in the parables of the Lost Coin and Lost Sheep there is an ambiguity, for it is not clear whether the seeker of that which has been lost is Jesus Himself or God—an ambiguity which suggests that, for Jesus, His own agony and death on behalf of the redemption of sinners was not to be distinguished from God's. In the last great act and sacrifice of redeeming love He and God would be together. His sacrifice, in a very real sense, was God's.

But Jesus, as has been said, looked beyond death to life and victory. It may be that He has pictured this victory in the form and words of Jewish Apocalyptic literature; He may have

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likened His own personal victory to the glorious return of the Son of Man. History testifies to a mightier and more glorious victory. But the image of the victorious Man lay to His hand; it was the inevitable image to describe the mighty confidence of His heart. God had, it is true, a greater glory for His beloved Son than was ever ascribed to the Son of Man of Jewish Apocalypse. Human imagination can never rise to the mighty purposes of God. But in picturing the Son of Man existing from the very beginning, sitting in the future on the throne of God as judge of the world—the World's Universal Lord, at whose presence the whole heaven and earth are transformed, Jewish imagination gave to Jesus a picture in which He could set forth His triumph. And in identifying Himself with the Son of Man, Jesus showed how sure He was of Himself, of His cause and of God. Death would not destroy Him; it could only lead to His triumph and the victory of God's redeeming Love.

And this sure and ultimate victory was not His alone; it would be shared by all who were one with Him in the purpose and method of His Life and in the deep, divine meaning of His death, and it would be their completed and perfect redemption.

II. The Testimony of Paul

PAUL was the subject of Redemption. He was 'twice born.' In Christ he had become a new creation. To understand, then, what Paul means by Redemption we have to try to penetrate into the experience which changed for him all life's currents and values. It is through the door of the Apostle's religious experience rather than through the door of his speculations that we shall enter into the truth of Redemption according to Paul.

First, then, we shall attempt to deal with Paul's experience of Redemption, and later with Paul's thoughts and speculations concerning this experience; that is, first with Paul the redeemed through Christ, and then with Paul the theologian and Defender of the Faith. The division, of course, cannot be adhered to strictly; it is never possible to separate completely a man's religion from his theology or his experience from his thought.

The literary sources, then, to which we must first turn our attention are the three accounts given in Acts of his conversion, and the refer-

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ences of Paul himself regarding the great event which are to be found in his Epistles.

The three accounts of the conversion in the Book of Acts (Acts ix, 1-30; xxij, 1-21; xxvi 1-20) have doubtless a close literary relation. The critics are not agreed as to which is the most original. The second and third accounts are given as if in Paul's own words, but that does not ensure them any historical advantage over the first, for the author of the Acts doubtless formed his speeches on the same plan as Thucydides has told us that he formed the speeches of Pericles. The author believes that he has been true to the mind of Paul on the great event. There are in the three accounts one or two insignificant differences; the visit of the Apostle to Ananias and his flight from Damascus to Jerusalem, are not mentioned in the third account, and have been questioned as regards their historicity, chiefly on the ground of what Paul tells us of his conversion in the Epistle to the Galatians. However, when we have yielded to all the demands of criticism, certain facts, and those of the highest importance, remain.

Paul sets out for Damascus. He is the legally authorized persecutor of the Christians, and he is determined to give full play to his

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authority. On the way a strange thing occurs. He sees the Crucified Jesus. He hears His voice. He is convinced that the Crucified has been raised from the dead. On his arrival at Damascus the persecutor of the Christians becomes the preacher of Jesus as the Christ and Son of God.

Such is the story of Paul's conversion in the Book of Acts. But, however interesting the story there given may be, the direct personal witness of Paul himself, as he gives it in his Epistles, is more valuable. And here the important passages are (i) the piece of autobiography in the first chapter of Galatians, (ii) the passage in 1 Corinthians xv, where Paul speaks of the appearances of the Risen Christ, and (iii) the passage in Philippians iii. 7-11, where Paul describes the revolution that has taken place in his life as the result of his conversion.

In the first of these passages (Galatians i), Paul is defending His Apostleship. He maintains that in his call to the Apostleship no man had share. The Gospel which he had preached was not human, for he did not receive it from any man, but through a revelation of Jesus Christ. The author of this revelation was God Himself, who had called him from his birth

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by divine grace, to reveal His own Son in him, so that he might preach to the Gentiles. The whole experience is a matter concerning only God, Christ and himself.

Paul specifies neither the time nor the place of this revelation. The time was chosen by God, divinely appointed. He says that he did not go up to Jerusalem, he went to Arabia and returned to Damascus, but, in mentioning these facts, Paul is simply emphasizing the complete independence of the revelation of God's Son in him, with its call to Apostleship. But, though Paul does not mention time or place, there is little doubt but that this experience took place when Paul, the authorized persecutor of the Christians, was on the Damascus road. In this piece of autobiography we have then Paul's own personal account of that great event, thrice recorded in the Acts.

According to Paul's own testimony then, he was the subject of a direct, personal revelation of Jesus Christ. It is not true to call this experience 'subjective,' for God was its author and Christ was its material, and both of these were to Paul transcendent realities. Through this experience he became the Apostle of the Crucified and Risen Jesus to the Gentiles.

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The passage in 1 Corinthians xv does not deal with Paul's conversion, but it is of significance here that Paul regards the revelation which came to him on the Damascus road as essentially of the same nature as came to the other Apostles and Christians generally. The revelation was not peculiar to him; the same revelation given by God of Jesus Christ made Peter an Apostle and others disciples and Christians. If Paul insists that the revelation of Christ is a necessity for Apostleship, he does not free others who might be prophets or teachers or simple Christians from the same necessity. For a man to become an Apostle, or to become a Christian, God had to reveal His own Christ in his heart and life. Without Christ, without a divine revelation of Him, no man could be redeemed—could be a Christian at all.

In the passage, Philippians iii. 7-11, Paul is combating his Jewish adversaries. He maintains that they should have no confidence in natural privileges, but in Christ alone. If anyone had ground for such confidence it was himself—'Circumcised the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, in regard to the Law a Pharisee, in zeal persecuting the Church, in the righteous-

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ness which the Law demands, blameless in his devotion.' If any one could boast of natural privileges, he could, as much as, and more than they all. But there had come a revolution in his valuation of those natural and acquired privileges. These were now to him of no value compared with the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as his Lord. Race, position, merit, reputation, these were now nothing and less than nothing. Christ and the new life that had come through Him were everything. What had caused this revolution in values? It was his experience on the road to Damascus.

We have then two accounts of Paul's conversion, the one in Acts thrice told, and Paul's own account. Both accounts are agreed that the conversion was sudden, and the great turning point in Paul's life; that it was due to God and to God alone; at least, this latter is true if we accept the view that the episode relative to Ananias and the return to Jerusalem (Acts ix. 26, 27) are not historical in Acts and are due to the desire of the writer of Acts to give some kind of ecclesiastical sanction to Paul's conversion and preaching of the Gospel. Again, in both accounts the substance of the revelation is the same—the crucified but now living Jesus.

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It has been maintained that the conversion of Paul was not as sudden as he himself thought or as the writer in Acts describes. There had been preparation in Paul's mind. The testimony of the Christians, and especially of the martyr Stephen, had influenced Paul and left its mark—unknown to him—upon his mind. Then there was, too, Paul's experience of Pharisaism; he must have felt, though he would not confess the fact to himself, its weakness; its inability to satisfy the passionate desire for righteousness which was in Paul's heart. We may allow all that. We may grant that there were influences, Christian and Pharisaic, acting upon Paul and leading up to the great event, but, all the same, the term "sudden" naturally describes Paul's conversion. If we follow backwards the line of development in any mental or natural process, there is really no suddenness—that element, by the collecting of causes and conditions, becomes eliminated. 'Sudden' is a term relative to ourselves and to our present condition and knowledge; and Paul and the writer of Acts describe Paul's conversion, not in the terms of a complete knowledge of all the psychological factors and influences, but they describe it as it affected Paul at the time; to him it was

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sudden. And when we view the fact, as it immediately and directly presents itself to us, it was sudden. To-day the enemy of Christ and to-morrow His advocate is for us "sudden," whatever factors or process may have brought about the change.

Again, Paul's insistence on the fact that man had no share in his conversion may seem to be exaggerated. If there had not been already a Christian society, or at least Christians, then Paul's conversion would have been, we cannot say impossible, but historically improbable. Paul was not utterly independent of, and isolated from the first believers in his great experience. But we have not to judge Paul's insistence on the independence of all human means of his conversion by our knowledge of the action of personal and social forces. When Paul says the revelation was due to God and His Christ alone, he is speaking directly out of his immediate experience and knowledge, and what he says is the truth as he knows it. Religious men claim to-day a direct and immediate knowledge of God and His dealings with them; their claim does not rule out personal and social influence consciously felt or not felt by themselves, but it does maintain that what they know of God is God's own gift per-

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sonally given to themselves. Their religious experience is supremely a matter between themselves and God alone. The journey along which the gift has come, the social forces which go to make up the experience are, for the time being at least, forgotten. The preoccupation is solely with the giver and His gift. To men so preoccupied it is true, that the gift is of God, of God alone and not of men.

Such then is the testimony of the great transforming event in Paul's life. Let us now try and enter a little more fully into its meaning. By nature and choice Paul was passionately devoted to righteousness. He was one of those men to whom the supreme, insistent question is, 'How shall I become righteous before God?' To every Jew two ways were possible for the solution of this problem. There was the way of privilege, and the way of moral striving and obedience. Selfish, superficial and weak natures would choose and almost involuntarily glide into the former; they would say, 'We have Abraham to our father, we have Moses and the Law . . .' and with that they would remain content, and deluded. But that way could never have satisfied Saul. He was too earnest and too insistent in his demand for the real thing ever to be content

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with that egoistic, self-deluded morality that inevitably degenerates into religious 'humbug.' The way of privilege was not for him: and so he chose the way of duty, of obedience, of moral striving. To fulfil the law in its great commands and in its smallest details became the passion of his life and the hope of his salvation. And, in choosing the service of the Law as the means of salvation, Paul believed that he had chosen God's way, for the Law was God's own voice and commandment.

In actual experience, however, this choice did not and could not work out as Saul expected. Saul was naturally a great soul and a legalistic religion and a morality that is all "Don'ts" is not the food upon which great souls thrive. The Law—morality—with its endless prohibitions, crushes them; with its exaltation of pettifogging precepts and its constitution of the slightest breach of them as sinful, it tends to confuse moral distinctions and to degrade moral life into mechanical routine which sickens healthy men; with its hedging in of life to small duties, it saps the energies and prevents a break-away into noble devotion and sacrifice which are real life and liberty. For Saul to choose the way of service of the Law was literally to become a

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slave and to enter into prison (Gal. iii. 24, 25). But he did take service under the Law, and the Law never had a more faithful and loyal servant.

The Law never did and never could satisfy Paul's deepest needs. Where was the personal freedom, the joy in a living God for which he craved? Certainly not from the service of the Law. But that was not all. He must have felt—we know from his letters that he did feel—that the Law expected too much. It demanded from men what men could never give. It demanded no less than its complete fulfilment. The Law was false to human nature. It demanded everything; it gave nothing.

That, however, was not the worst. With its cold, stern 'Thou shalt' or 'Thou shalt not,' hurled at warm, impulsive human nature, the Law became a positive incentive to evil. At the cold, bloodless heart of the Law there was a lie. The stern exacter of righteousness incited the heart of man to evil.

And yet, Saul never complained of the Law. Loyalty forbade him. If the Law had failed in his case, the fault was his, not the Law's. The failure only called for a deeper devotion on his part. And the opportunity for a deeper devotion came. A sect had arisen in Judaism that de-

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clared that a man who had been condemned as a breaker of the Law, whom the Law itself had pronounced as cursed of God, was the Messiah of God. That sect was bringing God's Law into dishonour and ridicule. To blot out that sect with its blasphemy—surely that would fulfil the Law and please its author, God. And so, Saul denied every humane and tender feeling of his heart and, for the Law's sake, became the murderer of the Christians.

But it was no more easy for Saul than it is for lesser men, for the sake of what they think to be true, to deny the feelings of the heart ; and, to murder men who were only faithful to their deepest convictions, however mistaken and blasphemous those convictions might be, could have brought little satisfaction to Saul. For the Law he had denied himself, sacrificed the tenderness of his heart, and yet no peace. There on the way to Damascus he had done all, given all, sacrificed all for the Law, but in spite of all, in the conscience there arose a cry, ' O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death ? ' Everything had failed. It was the cry of despair.

That cry was answered on the road to Damascus. Thanks be to God who gave him there and then the victory through the revelation

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of Jesus Christ. There and then he saw Jesus the Lord.

Two problems instantly arise: (i) What was this seeing? and (ii) What was seen?

What was the "seeing"? In common usage and popular language we recognize, broadly speaking, three forms of "seeing." We "see" outward objects, and we see them in their connection one with another. In this seeing, it is the sense of external perception that comes into play. Again we "see" demonstrated truths and logical reasonings, here it is the intellect and the reasoning powers that see. And, thirdly, we "see" ideals—moral and spiritual realities. Every day of their lives men are seeing in these three ways. The three ways are not in experience distinct and exclusive of each other. In sense perception, in the seeing of outward things, we see them in their relation, but "relation" is not a thing apprehended by the eye of flesh alone: in intellectual perception, sense is not always excluded, even in a process of mathematical reasoning we may be looking at figures by which the reasoning is helped; and in spiritual perception, in the vision of ideals, we quickly clothe our ideals in concrete forms. We can, however, distinguish these different kinds of

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seeing, and rightly so, for they are different in their manner and in their object. We "see" things visible and we "see" things invisible, and the seeing in each case belongs to a different order of experience. Of course, on a strictly materialistic interpretation of the word there is only one kind of seeing, the seeing that is in its mode and in its object material, but nothing has proved the falsehood of absolute materialism more than the fact that men do see ideas and ideals, they have visions of the invisible (even materialistic philosophers see the idea of materialism), and it is by such visions that the reason and conscience live.

Paul's vision of Jesus was, pre-eminently, a vision of the invisible. He saw Jesus as the Christ of God. God's Son was revealed in him. The power of such vision depends upon the degree of a man's spiritual culture. He may be blind in the eye of flesh, but clear of vision in things invisible. And Paul was gifted in the power of spiritual vision. In his later Christian life we know that he had visions and revelations which belonged to the same order of vision as that by which he saw the Lord. The difference between the vision on the Damascus road and the later visions was, that the first was epoch-making

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in his life and character in a way that the later were not, and it had an intensity and a personal wholeness which did not belong to them.

(ii) But what did Saul see? He saw Jesus the Crucified, now raised from the dead, the living Christ of God. He saw an ideal; he saw spiritual reality, he saw the Christ. But to put it in that way misses the important facts. First, it misses the fact that the ideal came to him; it was revealed. The immortal Crucified entered into him. God who had set him apart from his mother's womb revealed His Son to him. The Christ, in that great hour, loved him and gave Himself to him. It was no longer he that lived, but Christ lived in him. And that Christ came to him with a new righteousness, a new joy, a new peace and a new service. Christ came to him. And this is the second important fact, it was not the Christ whom Saul, as a Pharisee, had thought of and known and longed for, it was the Christ that was in Jesus the Crucified, that lived and died in him, it was the Christ that was Jesus. The Christ whom as a Pharisee he had known after the flesh was not the Christ of God. The Christ of God was Jesus, and on the Damascus road with the eye of faith and the spirit Paul saw Him.

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It is, from the religious point of view, quite profitless to argue for the physical objectivity of the vision. The burning midday sun, the blindness of Saul, his prostration, may well be actual facts, but they are unessential to the great experience. From the same point of view, it is profitless to insist on the corporeality of the Christ that was revealed. Purely hypothetical is it also to try and construct how much of the historical Jesus was contained in the vision. We gather from a careful study of Paul's letters that he knew more of the historical Christ, of His deeds and words of love, of His humility and reverence, than is generally thought, but, probably, he learnt most of this after his conversion. Jesus crucified, crucified for us, and raised to an eternal life, personal love unto death and with God's mighty valuation upon it—that was the revelation. The most highly spiritual can only apprehend so much. And when that 'so much' contains the absolute—Death that means Life, the crucified become the eternal Christ of God—details fade out of the vision. The omnipotent love of God has been revealed, and that is enough.

This experience on the Damascus road contained in germ, it is said, all Paul's religion and theology. Broadly speaking, this is true. In

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this experience we see free grace, for the revelation was not due to any merit on Saul's part ; it was due entirely to the goodwill of God which acted powerfully on the new convert. There was also in the experience faith without works ; for such work—the persecution of the Christians—as Saul was engaged in was positively sinful. There came too on the road to Damascus the beginning of new life inspired by the Spirit, so different from the vain obedience of the Law—the beginning of that new life which was through union with Christ. Again, there was in the experience the truth of Predestination, for it was all the result of God's special and selective dealing with Saul. This predestination is not, it is true, the Calvinistic doctrine according to which some men are elected to salvation and others to damnation. It is the predestination of the religious man who feels that he owes the initiation of his salvation and his whole saved life to God alone. No doubt Paul is a severe Calvinist when he reasons later about the destiny of Pharaoh, Esau and Jacob, whose destinies were absolutely determined by the omnipotent will of God ; but when he is thinking of his own contemporaries, of men into whose face he had looked, and of the Gentiles whom it was his joy

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to serve in the Lord, he has another story to tell. 'God shut up *all* under sin that He might have mercy upon *all*.' Predestination, Grace, Faith without works, Union with Christ, they were all contained in the great experience.

On the Damascus road Saul saw the Lord. He was redeemed. He was made a new creation. The old things passed away ; all became new. The law of sin and death gave way to the law of the spirit and of life.

PAUL THE THEOLOGIAN AND DEFENDER OF THE FAITH

Paul was by nature a theologian, and he had been trained in the theology of his day. For him it was a natural necessity to attempt some intellectual expression of his religious experience. As a Christian he never, however, as far as we know, published a treatise on systematic theology ; he was too much absorbed in the work of Redemption ; and it has been left for later theologians to attempt a systematization of the ruling ideas of his thought. The natural bent of Paul for speculation was not left without food and opportunity when he became a Christian. The heavenly vision to which he was not disobedient did not leave him without intellectual problems

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of his own to solve. He had also to defend his faith against the attacks of his own countrymen.

We attempt here a brief account of Paul, as an intellectual Christian and Defender of the Faith.

The Meaning of Sin. Sin with Paul was not simply a human, it was a cosmic fact. One of the beliefs which he had inherited from Judaism was in the existence of Satan and his angels, and it was their revolt that was the ultimate origin of sin. If Redemption, then, was to be complete, Sin must be slain at its source and dealt with in its cosmic aspect. Later we shall see how this was done through the death of Jesus Christ upon the Cross—how Satan was defeated by the Crucified and Risen Jesus.

But while sin was with Paul a cosmic fact, it was with sin as a human experience that he was chiefly and most intensely concerned. He describes sin as an ignorance of God ; it is a dishonouring of God ; it is rebellion against His will and order. Sin is not simply an act or series of acts, it is the subordination of humanity to a power hostile to God. It is described as a state of war between man and God. Sin disrupts the unity of man's personality and renders him

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morally powerless, so that the things he would do he cannot. In the flesh, in the natural life with all its desires, sin finds a home ; through the flesh it expresses itself. Human sin is with Paul, essentially, personal alienation from God. For this personal alienation the sinner is responsible. It is quite plain that Paul believed in the moral freedom of the individual, otherwise his repeated calls to repentance, to righteousness, to the working out of salvation, would have no meaning.

Sin is universal. All men are sinners. Not only Gentiles but Jews are under its power and are actually sinners. The possession of the Law, written or unwritten, does not save from sin. Good, holy, and righteous as the Law may be, noble as its purpose—to show the way of life—may have been, it has only revealed sin in its sinfulness—been, as it were, a factor in the actual appearance of sin ; for before the Law came in, sin was dead or dormant—and, in its actual working upon human nature, the Law had become an incentive to sin. The Law was well-intentioned, but it was ineffective for its own task. Paul attempted to prove the universality of sin by proof texts from the Old Testament which were for him authoritative, and by a presentation of the state of matters in Jewish and Gentile society.

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Sin has for Paul its historic origin in the disobedience of Adam. Through that disobedience there has come into the world an evil principle which has, as its consequence, all the sinning of mankind, even though men do not sin exactly in the same way as Adam. But this theory of the origin of sin—a borrowed theory—only explains when and under what conditions sin entered into the human world. The theory does not solve the problem of the ultimate origin of sin. And so we have another point of view in Romans i. 18-32. There the root of man's sinfulness is idolatry, for which man is condemned by God to a reprobate mind in which he does unspeakable iniquity. But this idolatry has been inspired by Satan and his angels. They have demanded a worship which was due to the Creator alone. They have seduced man, with the result that man is under the domination of Satan and Death. Satan means Death, which is really his one and only power. Human sin is one of the consequences of the rebellion of Satan ; it is a particular instance of the disorder which he and his angels have brought into the whole world.

Sin has dire consequences for the whole world. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth.

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But it is with the consequences of sin to man with which Paul is chiefly concerned. For man sin means death. The wages of sin is death. That could be the only wages, for to sin is to come under the dominion of the Devil who was a murderer from the beginning. The consequence of sin—Death—comes about in two ways. It comes about inevitably, for there is a law of sin and death. But we also find in Paul's letters the idea that Death is or will be the result of a divine judgment ; it is the doom of the divine anger which will be pronounced upon the sinner at the Great Assize. No doubt Paul found these two conceptions in the religious traditions of his own people. He accepted both, perhaps without feeling any contradiction between them, certainly without any attempt to reconcile them.

The Grace of God. The fact of sin, the whole cosmic and human disorder, calls for Redemption which has for its cause the grace of God. Man cannot change the disorder even in his own domain. Divine grace is the initial and only cause of Redemption. Paul has several words for the divine attribute which is the cause of salvation. It is love (ἀγάπη) the divine

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attribute itself ; it is mercy (ἐλεος) which is love in presence of the sinner ; it is grace (χάρις) which is love personal and effective in the sinner. These three terms express the same reality in different connexions. There are other terms,—the divine good-will (εὐδοκία), goodness or generosity (χρηστότης), sympathy (φιλανθρωπία), long-suffering (μακροθυμία) patience (ἀνόχη), which are all derived from love. The nomenclature reveals how rich and many-sided was Paul's idea of the Love or Grace which is the source of Redemption.

A characteristic element of Divine Grace or Love is that it is free. God is able not to save or to save, according to His grace. The initiative of the divine mercy is in the will of God alone ; it is not called forth by man's tears of repentance. The divine grace is absolute. Again, the divine love is exercised towards the sinful, to those who are the very enemies of God.

A new and original element was the idea of grace as personal power. That element does not appear in Judaism. In the Old Testament the idea of grace is that of favour, benediction, benevolence and pardon, not that of personally transmitted power. Nor is this element found in the Greek idea of grace. In Philo, for

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instance, grace signifies those natural gifts which make man a reasonable being. The new element was, doubtless, contributed out of Paul's Christian experience. Grace is not simply attitude with Paul, it is action. It lays hold of men, calls them, justifies them, transforms them, redeems them and makes them sons of God ; it masters human personality and pervades the whole of man's life.

But love or grace is not immediate in its power and action for the redemption of the world. The divine love forms the project of salvation, and the divine wisdom provides the means and traces the plan. There is a counsel of salvation—a counsel which existed before the foundation of the world. From all eternity God has seen that man would fall into sin, from all eternity He has willed and counselled to save him. This wise and loving counsel of God which evolves the plan of Redemption is superior to all human wisdom ; it has been hidden to all past ages, but it has now been revealed to those who are perfect—that is, the philosophy of salvation and its divine method are now revealed to believers.

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The Person and Work of Christ. The Redemption of man and the world is, in the wisdom of

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God, brought about by Christ and His work. Christ is the Son of God. By the Sonship of Christ Paul means something more than moral filiation. The Son of God is the first-born of all creation ; He is a mighty being anterior to the world, superior to all the universe which has been created by and in Him. He has Himself been born or created of God. We have to remember that the heaven of Paul was very populous. It contained principalities, powers, authorities, lordships, thrones. There was for Paul a whole celestial hierarchy, at the head of which stands the First-born of God—God's own Son, the Son of His love, God's image, the fullness of the divinity, Himself in the form of God and with like attributes. But the Son of God is not God. In all his Epistles Paul maintains a clear distinction between God and the First-born of all creation, and so he maintains an absolute monotheism.

This Son of God is the mediator of Creation. Later, he becomes the mediator of Redemption, for, in due time, God sent His Son into the world to redeem the world. But this sending is also an act of free determination on the part of the Son. The Son of God by a conscious, reflected, willed act becomes man, and this free determination presupposes His concrete personal

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existence apart from God. By His incarnation the Son has become a real man born of woman, and has also become the Messiah of God, that is, He has entered into a situation and condition in which He can carry out God's plan for the Redemption of the world.

The Son of God had to become incarnate to fulfil His chief work—which was to die. The Cross is the supreme work of the Son of God in the redemption of the world. The Cross which to the Jew was a stumbling-block and to the Greek folly revealed the power and the wisdom of God's redeeming love. And to show forth the divine power and wisdom of the Cross of Christ, Paul sets forth its virtue in various aspects.

(a) Christ died according to the Scriptures, that is, according to the revealed Providence of God.

(b) The Cross is the defeat of the Devil and his angels. It was really they who crucified the Son of God, but this was their undoing. They crucified one who was sinless, and they were defeated. God justified the Son of God by raising Him from the dead. Christ in His Cross defeated the Devil ; He struck with a mortal blow the Evil One, the source of all sin. This victory over the Devil is perfect in Christ's case,

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and it will find its completion, on His return, in the victory of all believers.

(*c*) Christ, in His death, is the Paschal Lamb, an offering made to God. In His blood, a sacrifice is offered to God for the saving of the world.

(*d*) In His death upon the tree, Christ receives the curse of the Law. He received the uttermost penalty that the Law could pronounce upon Sin. The sinless is punished, the sinful is now freed of the curse. The uttermost demand of the Law has been met. In the death of Christ the Law has received satisfaction. The sinner is now freed from the Law.

(*e*) There is a further idea to which Paul gives expression in explaining the efficacy of the Cross, namely, the idea of the unity of Christ, the Son of God, with men, a unity completely effected by the Son of God becoming man. As one has died for all, therefore all are dead.

Of these explications of the Cross of Christ, the third (*c*) rests on the premise that there is some atoning efficacy in blood and in the offering of it in sacrifice to the Deity, and the fourth (*d*) upon the premise that there is a legal relation between God and man, and that the law has rights of its own which must be met before God

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can be as gracious as He would will to be. If these premises cannot be maintained, then the explications of the Cross which rest upon them fall to the ground. And it is only upon the basis of Paul's cosmology that the Cross as a present and final defeat of Satan and all his powers, has any value.

But with whatever logical and Biblical arguments Paul may try to justify and defend the Cross of Jesus, the work of Christ—in which the death, the stumbling-block, has become the chief corner-stone—is due, all of it, to the Love of God. It is God's love that has willed and inspired the death of the Son of God. It is all a manifestation of God's love and Christ's love. And when Paul is writing, not as an apologist for the Cross, not as a defender of the faith, but out of his heart and experience as a Christian, it is upon the love and grace alone of the Cross that he insists. 'The Son of God has loved me and given Himself to me.' 'For Christ, while we were yet weak, in due time died for the ungodly.' 'But God commends His love to us in this, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'

The Resurrection of Christ. The death of Christ is without value apart from the Resurrec-

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tion, which is not, according to Paul, a mere reward for Christ's sufferings and death, though he does say that, for the joy set before Him, He endured the shame ; nor is the Resurrection an inevitable consequence of Christ's divine nature. The Resurrection is God's own act by which Jesus was publicly declared to be the Son of God. God raised Him from the dead and justified His Son.

Through this act of God, Christ is raised to the divine position which He held in His pre-existent state ; He is raised to an even greater glory, for He is now at the very right hand of God. Christ became at the resurrection essentially Spirit. The Crucified lives now and rules to carry on the great redemptive work on the human (as Paul himself experienced on the road to Damascus) and on the cosmic scale, and He will live and rule until He has put all enemies, even Death itself, beneath His feet, and then He will surrender all to God, that God may be all in all.

Two questions, so closely related that they are really one question, may here be put. The first is, *Why* has Paul elaborated this doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ ? And the

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second is, Whence did this doctrine come? What are its sources?

Why has Paul elaborated this doctrine? Why is the Crucified set forth as the Son of God with divine prerogatives? The conception ought not to be regarded as an idea borrowed from Jewish theology. Paul, at a very early stage in his Christian life, had ceased to know Christ after the flesh, that is, in all probability, to interpret the Christ according to Pharisaic conceptions of the Messiah. After all, the Christ of Paul's experience was very different from the Christ of Jewish theology. When Paul called Jesus the Son of God and the Incarnate Son of God the Christ, he was not restating Jewish theological ideas; he was speaking out of his own experience. The crucified Christ on the road to Damascus acted *divinely* upon Paul. It was a *heavenly* vision that was given to him and in obedience to which he found peace with God and a divine life.

Again, why did Paul concentrate his thought on the death of Christ and attempt to explicate it from different points of view? Why did the Cross become supreme in his theological thinking? The answer is, because the Cross was supreme in his life. It was a crucified Christ that, in

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the grace of God, first appeared to him and made him a new creation. In the Crucified he saw the interpretation and the solution of his life's problem. In the Crucified he found the answer to that question which had torn and well nigh brought to despair the heart of Saul the Pharisee: 'How shall I become holy and please God?' By the acceptance in faith of the Crucified he found peace, joy, and newness of life—found salvation. No wonder the Cross was everything to Paul, and that he says that he determined to know nothing save Christ as crucified.

But that was not all. Paul in his great hour simply had to accept the Crucified ; either that, or abandonment to utter despair was the situation. The last attempt to fulfil the Law by cruel persecution was bringing and could bring no peace. 'Saul, Saul, why dost thou kick against the pricks?' This last attempt was only increasing his burdens. He simply had to accept the Cross for life and peace. But, none the less, the Cross was a stumbling-block. It pierced his mental being. It denied traditions that were in his blood and in the blood of all Jews. The Crucified the Messiah ! the Crucified the Redeemer ! His soul said 'Yes' but his mentality

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said, 'How can these things be?' He had, for his own mental satisfaction, to find some synthesis that reconciled the convictions of his heart with his inherited intellectual beliefs.

Further, Paul had been made a missionary, and he had to make the wisdom of God in Christ crucified acceptable to others. To the Jews the Cross was a stumbling-block, to the Greeks folly ; he had to turn the rock of offence into the chief corner-stone, and to make the folly of the Cross the very height of reasonableness. And then there were Jewish Christians, who denied the all-sufficiency of Christ crucified, and so he had to show that Christ crucified satisfied every condition which Jewish theology demanded. Paul's whole apologetic of the Cross arose out of his experience ; it was conditioned by the theological ideas and the mental outlook of his day.

What was the source of Paul's doctrine? The question has really been answered already. The form was Jewish Messianic doctrine. Every demand that that doctrine made of the Messiah, every condition the Messiah had to fulfil, Jesus the Crucified had met, as He met also all demands of the Law. But the whole doctrine was revolutionized by the fact that it was Jesus, the Cruci-

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fied, who was the Messiah. We may say that the Jewish doctrine was the frame, but the picture itself was Jesus who was not Jewish, and (though the metaphors may be broken) the picture completely changed the frame. Paul's experience was the real formative element in his apologetic of the Christ and the Cross. The Jewish categories were there, and he made the most of them, in face of the task which lay before him. They were, doubtless, the right and proper categories for him to use, and even to-day we may still use some of them in default of better ; for, though we are not Jews, we are men with Paul's human problem :—How can we become righteous and please God ?—still ours. And, in our need, we turn to Christ as Crucified and find in Him the wisdom and power of God, freedom and life, and say, He is the Son of God and His Cross doth satisfy all our need.

The act of justification. On the ground of the Death of Christ God justifies the sinner. "To justify" is a legal term ; it means to pronounce or declare righteous. Justification is the non-imputation of sin and guilt. And justification itself is justified by the Death of Christ. That death has allowed God, as it were, to act as a

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gracious Judge and to say to the convicted sinner 'not guilty,' and to declare him righteous before the Law. Why, it may be asked, could not God act in this generous way without the Death of Christ? God could act as He willed. He was as absolute as the most absolute potentate who could pardon whom he willed and condemn whom he willed. But the situation, as presented by Paul, was a legal one, and there was a third party to the suit—the Law and its representatives. Really, they had no rights in the case at all, but they thought they had; they had to be considered and satisfied. The Death of Christ satisfied every legal requirement that the most punctilious lawyer could urge, and in His legal decision of declaring the sinner 'not guilty' God was legally just; the Law and its representatives had not the slightest ground for complaint. Paul's argument for the rightness of justification was really an *argumentum ad legem*; it was his way of meeting the objections of the legal mind, and perhaps of that element in his own, for his conversion did not wipe out for him completely the literal authority of the Old Testament.

In Christ the doom of the Law had been fulfilled, not for Himself, for He was sinless, but

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for his sinful brethren. God could now, in face of every legal demand, forgive the sinner. By justification the sinner is not *ipso facto* righteous—he is only accounted righteous by God who can now treat the sinner as though he actually were. The doctrine of justification is legalistic and that is its inherent weakness, for God does not deal with men as a Judge whose first duty is to respect the Law. He deals graciously as a loving Father, as Paul well knew, but He was forced by the situation in which He was placed into a legalistic apologetic. The forensic formula was useful, but it was and is inadequate to the experience of Redemption.

Faith. The sinner is only justified by faith. As the death of Christ may be regarded as the objective condition, so faith is the subjective condition. Faith is not a legal term, and that shows at once that there was something more than legalism in the process of justification. According to Paul, Faith is the essence of the Christian life. One of his names for the Christians is 'the faithful' or 'the believers.' What Paul meant by faith we can see in the instance of Abraham's faith which he adduces. The faith of Abraham is essentially confidence in God and in His Power

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which transcends nature ; it does not rest on human wisdom, it can even be regarded as a defiance hurled at the reason of man ; its object is God who made the promise : its whole *raison d'être* is the power of God. Faith, then, with Paul is confidence in God's power, and is itself a creation of that power. It is directed towards God, but there is also faith with Christ for its object, for in Christ are revealed the redemptive powers of God and the realization of the divine promises. To believe in Christ is to believe in God, for Christ is the centre of the redemptive promise and power of God. Faith is the gift of God who sends forth preachers to declare salvation by faith, and gives to the heart faith to receive the message. Faith is no mere intellectual acceptance of a truth or of a system of truths. The faith that justifies the sinner is confidence in the mercy of God and in the power of God to redeem the sinner from his sin *and*—contrary to all Jewish wisdom—from the Law.

Union with Christ. Faith, however, is not simply trust or confidence in God and Christ. It is the beginning of a personal union of the believer with the object of his trust and confidence. Faith in Christ becomes and is personal union

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with Him. This personal union is the great fact in Paul's experience ; it is one of the great formative ideas in his religious thinking. The idea appears in his earliest Epistle (1 Thess. v. 10). In 1 Corinthians, this union is the purpose of the divine call of the Christians, and the ideal which God has set before them. In Romans viii. 29 the union is the end of the divine predestination, " Whom he foreknew them also He did predestinate to become like the image of His Son (*συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκονος τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ*) that He might become the first-born among brethren." Paul says of himself that he has been crucified with Christ, that he no longer lives, but Christ lives in him. Through this union the believer and the Christ are made one spirit. (1 Cor. vi. 17).

One of the effects of this union is that isolated, individual, exclusive life is ended. A new life arises in which there is neither male nor female, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither Greek nor barbarian, neither bond nor free. Through the union a spiritual brotherhood is created—a spiritual unity that can contain differences of sex, culture, nationality and race, and yet remain one. Another effect is, that the bond which binds the sinner to the world and to the flesh

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is broken. "The world is crucified for me, and I to the world." Christ by His death no longer belongs in any way to the world, He is free from it, from all its allurements and powers : He now belongs to a heavenly and spiritual sphere. Those who are one with Him have, through the union, the same freedom and heavenly power.

Again, by His death Jesus became free from the Law, the Law had no longer any power or authority over Him, and so there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. They are free—free from sin, death, the Law, and all the evils of this world. By faith and union with Christ they live a new, spiritual and heavenly life.

Paul presents the fact of union in various ways. The relation of the slave to his lord is a figure of the truth. He calls himself the slave of Jesus Christ. As a slave was not personally his own, so he was not his own, he belonged to another. In the details of the Baptismal rite he sees a figure of the complete union with Christ. We have all been baptized in Christ, we have been baptized into His death, we have, etc. The Eucharist also is a form and means of union with Christ, and typifies the union of the believer

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with Christ and their union, one with another, through Him.

The Sacraments. The passage (Rom. vi. 4) concerning Baptism might, taken as it stands, be interpreted symbolically as a parable of the mystical union by faith. But taken in conjunction with other passages that refer to Baptism, it is plain that Baptism to Paul was something more than a symbol or parable. Baptism, in itself, has a real spiritual efficacy. For we all, by one spirit, have been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, bondmen or free, and we have all been made to receive one spirit. In Galatians iii. 26-27, faith *and* baptism are the two means by which the faithful become one with Christ. In the early Church, Baptism was the rite by which a believer entered the Christian community ; with Paul, by Baptism the believer enters into Christ Himself and Christ enters into him.

The same is true of the Eucharist. The Eucharist for Paul is a rite instituted by Jesus as a means of commemorating His sacrifice and uniting the believer to His death. The bread and wine are not mere symbols : they have in themselves an efficacy, and they can hurt anyone

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who may partake unworthily. It is true that to receive the grace that comes through the partaking of the bread and wine, certain spiritual conditions are necessary. What happened to some of the fathers in the wilderness and the fate of some communicants in Corinth provide a warning against unworthy communication. Christians must approach the body and blood of Christ in love one of another ; they must know what they are doing, and discern that it is with the dying Christ—with the Crucified—that they are communicating.

Paul was a sacramentalist. The rites of Baptism and the Eucharist had for him, in themselves, a real efficacy. There may have been an element of realism in Paul's thinking, but probably this realistic or sacramentalist interpretation of Baptism and the Eucharist had a quite simple, practical and religious motive. In heathen worship the idols and the things offered to them were supposed, somehow, to contain the demons which the idols represented, and to partake of something offered to idols was to communicate with the demons and to receive power from them. In the Greek mysteries, too, the worshipper was supposed to communicate really with the god. The worshipper, through mystic rites, became one

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with his god, one with his lord, and his lord became one with him. The Christian rites, then, could have no less efficacy than the rites of heathen and pagan. True, they were morally poles asunder from idol worship and the Greek mysteries, as far apart morally as Adonis or Mithras was apart in moral and spiritual character from Jesus the Crucified.

Popular religion and the Greek mysteries were a response to man's conscious need of redemption, through them the worshipper was supposed to be really delivered from self and the world. The Christian rites of Baptism and the Eucharist, which externally had certain similarities with the pagan, answered to the same need : they too were efficacious, they too communicated reality—reality not of an idol or a mythical god but reality, as it had been historically revealed in Jesus the Crucified.

Faith and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were all means and actual forms of the mystical union. As far as we know, Paul never brought them into relation ; no doubt because his purpose was practical, and there was no particular demand for a careful analysis and synthesis of the means by which the reality of the Christian life was maintained.

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Sanctification. Through the mystical union the believer is bound to Christ, and receives all the privileges which Christ has won. He is freed from the dominion of the world, sin and death. He lives no longer according to the flesh, but according to the spirit ; he has passed from a terrestrial to a heavenly existence. But all this, as far as the believer is concerned, is ideal, it is not realized in its completeness in this present world. A process of continual sanctification is still necessary for his redemption. Sanctification is connected with Justification and both have the same condition—faith. By faith the sinner is united to Christ, to the Spirit of Christ or of God or simply to the Spirit, and from the Spirit grow the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, kindliness, goodness, faith, humility, self-control.

But the fruits of the Spirit do not grow spontaneously or by magic. Morality is always to Paul a matter of the will. Man has still to work out his own moral salvation with fear and trembling, even if it is God who worketh in him both to will and to do. His sanctification still depends upon himself, even if it is God's eternal will concerning him. So, notwithstanding justification by faith and the mystical union, man is

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still compelled to live strenuously the good life. Redemption must have for Paul moral reality in it.

Has Paul receded into legalism? Has he passed in his redemption from an old to a new law? In one sense he has, but the transition is the proof of the reality of his redemption, for the new legalism and the old are different as day is from night. The old was morally and religiously powerless, the new is effective in righteousness and before God. Under the old legal morality a man was left to himself, to a self weakened by sin and in bondage to its power; he was powerless before the demands of the Law which gave a man no help but rather the reverse. Under the new legalism—the new law of Christ and the Spirit—a man still faces demands no less exacting, higher, more positive and ideal, more sweeping in their scope than those of the old, but he faces them with a new power and with a new self. The new law is Love—Christ's own Love—and Love gives before it demands, and gives more than it demands. Love suffereth long and is kind; it beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things. LOVE NEVER FAILETH. In the power of this love—Christ's own love—victory is secure.

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True, the moral struggle still continues. Sanctification is never perfect in this life. At times the fight may be terrific, as though all the hosts of evil were arrayed against us. The Devil is still on the field, but he wars now, not against weak flesh and blood, but against One who Himself has victoriously conquered, and who continues His victorious fight in man, giving man now the first-fruits of moral victory which are the promise of final triumph. In that hour of final triumph man's redemption will be complete.

That complete redemption will be when Christ returns ; and, for Paul, that return was near. The Parousia with its final judgment—a judgment which for the Christian had been anticipated in God's justification of him by faith—will usher in the complete redemption. Paul conceives the great redemptive consummation in terms of Jewish Apocalyptic thought. As a Rabbi, before his conversion, and when Jesus was to him a mere blasphemer, he had awaited a Saviour who would triumph over all the enemies of God, and lead in the divine kingdom. In Paul's idea of the final redemption we have, then, the old faith with a new content, for the Saviour now is not the Jewish Messiah, not Christ after the flesh, but Jesus, the man from heaven who

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had lived in Paul's world a life of meekness, love and sacrifice, who was crucified through the powers of evil by the hand of the Jews, who was raised from the dead, and who now lives at the right hand of God in grace and power, bestowing redeeming love upon the faithful.

In the earlier part of his career Paul believed that Christ would return during his own lifetime. Later, about the time when he wrote the second letter to the Corinthians, he changed his view. The cause of this change may have been a serious illness, or some intimation that his days were not to be long. But the change of view made no essential difference to his thought. If he died before the Parousia he would be with Christ, which was far better than life confined to the conditions of flesh and blood. And his death would make no difference to the glorious return of Christ and the consummated redemption of all believers.

In the great final act the believer will be completely changed. Flesh and blood will fall away. He will receive a new body, spiritual and heavenly. He will be like his Lord. Sin and Death will be finally overcome. God and His Kingdom will be all in all. And when Paul, in the passionate warmth of his heart, thinks of

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his own beloved countrymen, elected of God yet faithless to His call, he takes hope and looks forward to a universal redemption. "For God shut up all to disobedience, that He might have mercy upon *all*." "That as in Adam all die, so in Christ *all* shall be made alive."

When we consider Paul's expression of his experience of Redemption, of what may be broadly called his theology, there are elements, forms of thought and ideas which are not of the modern way of thinking. His idea of history or of time as containing two ages, his cosmology with its much populated heaven, with its principalities and powers of good and evil—his interpretation of the Death of Christ through ideas connected with blood-sacrifice, or through the idea of satisfaction made to inexorable law, may have to be rejected in the light of knowledge and justice and in the very name of Christ. His eschatology may need to be transformed or transcended (as it actually was by the Fourth Evangelist). Inconsistencies in his thought may have to be reconciled or left as defying reconciliation. His allegorical and Biblical proofs may have no force with us. An element of pagan thinking may be in his doctrine of the Sacra-

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ments. But, when we have rejected all that we are compelled to reject in the light of modern knowledge and truth, and in the name of Christ Himself, there still remains a great witness—a witness to the fact of Jesus Himself, to His humility and love and all their gracious influence, to the power of the Death and Resurrection ; a witness to this, that, through this Jesus Crucified and raised from the dead, God has been revealed as gracious towards the sinner, giving to him, in and through Christ, life that is mightier than all the evil and sin to which man is subject, whether they attack man as the powers of the air, or as the world and the flesh, or as the materialism and selfishness which press man down to the earth. In God's Christ, in union with Him, the sinner can become more than conqueror ; through God's Christ he can be raised from an earthly existence that ends in death to life itself, to love and joy and communion with God. After every possible deduction, there remains a great witness to a great Redemption and a great Redeemer.

III. The Testimony of the Fourth Evangelist

THE fourth Gospel was written by a man who, under the inspiration of the Spirit, has taken of the things of Christ and read their abiding and spiritual meaning for the souls of men. He was a "modernist," but, like every sane modernist, he was not afraid to conserve elements of earlier teaching, even when, at least *primâ facie*, they do not seem consistent with his own thinking. He was a mystic seeking in the temporal for the abiding reality, and his Gospel belongs to the Library of Devotional and Christian Mysticism. His work was the first, and remains to-day the greatest, composition in that library.

Mysticism is a type of piety at which practical and hard-thinking men sometimes look askance. It can become so vague as to be without moral content, may assume forms so grotesque that it loses all intellectual justification, and may become so emotionally self-centred as to be of little practical service. But the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel is saved from ethical vagueness by the fact that Jesus Christ is the object of

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devotion, and from intellectual grotesqueness and excess of emotionalism by the sane reasonableness of the author and by his firm grip of historic fact. Again, his Hebrew blood and Jewish education saved him from that type of mysticism in which the personalities of God and man are fused into a kind of misty vapour in which both are lost. Further, he is saved from that exclusive individualism which has been the mark of so many mystics, by his sense of Christian brotherhood. In his Gospel, while he writes of what he himself has known and felt, he does not forget the existence of his fellow-Christians, and he expressly includes them in his writing. He and they are of one mind and faith as regards the things of Christ.

There is another element in the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel which should not be forgotten. The mysticism is philosophic ; the reason is active in all its devotional thought. The philosophy which the author has accepted is the Doctrine of the Logos which, broadly speaking, corresponds to our modern doctrine of divine immanence.

The Logos is the agent and ground of all creation ; it is as eternal as God Himself ; it is implicit in the divine nature and explicit in the

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world of created being. The doctrine in Greek thought goes back to Heraclitus who uses it to explain the artistic order of nature ; it appears in a slightly different form, more transcendental and less immanent, in Plato's " Ideas," and the idea appears again in Stoicism where the Logos is the principle and agent of creation. The corresponding doctrine in Hebrew thought is that of Wisdom which is the personified or half-personified agent of God, God's master workman, both in history and nature, who rejoices in all his work.

With Philo, who was an orthodox Jew, the philosophy of the Logos entered on a new phase. He harmonized the Platonic idealism with the Stoic idea of the Logos as immanent Reason, and so Philo's Logos was not simply immanent but has an independent existence. The Logos with Philo is detached from the world of matter which, none the less, it creates and orders. Philo is also largely influenced by the Hebrew conception, and his Logos reveals as well as creates. The philosophy which the Evangelist uses had a sound, philosophical parentage.

Different views have been maintained regarding the immediate source of the Doctrine as it appears in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel.

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Was the immediate source the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament (or the doctrine of Memra—the word of Jewish Targums) or was it the philosophy of Philo? The question is unimportant. The most natural view is that the Evangelist was not thinking of, and did not use consciously, any particular source. The Logos doctrine was in the air; it had become a fusion of the best Greek and Hebrew thinking upon the relation of God to His world; it was the popular philosophy of the day. Everybody with any pretension to philosophy, and many with less than none, were talking freely of the Logos. And so the Evangelist, like a wise apologist, takes the popular philosophy—and it was no mean philosophy—as a handmaiden for the interpretation of his religion.

Harnack has put forward the view that the influence of the Logos doctrine in the Gospel is confined to the Prologue. He regarded it as a mere philosophical introduction to lure the *intelligentsia* of the day to read the Gospel. After the doctrine has served this specious purpose in the Prologue, it is of no further value to the author. This view, however, has not been generally accepted by students of the Gospel. The word 'Logos,' in the technical

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sense, it is true, never occurs again after the Prologue. But all the Philonian attributes of the Logos are given, and all the equivalents of the term Logos, such as Light, Life, Revealer of the Father, are found in the Gospel as the essential attributes of Christ. The doctrine has undoubtedly influenced the author's conception both of the Person of Christ and of His redeeming work, of which the Prologue gives a philosophical résumé.

The author uses his chosen philosophy with perfect freedom. He severs himself from Philo and the Philonian premisses when he says that the Word became flesh. Again, the action of the Logos with Philo is not essentially distinct from the life of the soul, but with John the Incarnate Logos creates something new. The experience of Christ radically changed the author's philosophy, whatever was its source.

The Fourth Gospel is no easy book to interpret. It contains heights of spiritual grandeur inaccessible to the ordinary mind. But besides this great difficulty there are others,—its various polemical aims, its literal inconsistencies which can only be reconciled in experience, and its unsystematic character in spite of the spiritual and artistic unity to which every page bears witness. The

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writer was a great soul and a great artist, a mystic, a prophet and a philosopher. He betrays no sign of a great conflict or moral crisis. His mind is of the serene, comprehensive, imperial order, naturally Christian. He uses the thought of the remote past and the nearer past of the evangelic history, and he masterfully makes his selection, seeking ever for reality, and writing with the supreme purpose that men may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing, may have life in His name, and that through Christ, the Son of God, they may become one.

We must now attempt a more detailed account of the author's thought, with the special purpose of trying to receive and understand his witness to the facts of Sin and Redemption.

A conception which affects the thinking of the whole Book is that of two worlds. There is a supersensible world of Light and Truth and Life, and another lower world of darkness, sin and the flesh. This conception is in itself important for the understanding of the author's idea of redemption, for it is from this lower world and not only from personal sin that man needs to be redeemed. Of this lower world the

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Evangelist takes a very pessimistic view. The world in itself is sinful, as we see in the phrase 'the sin of the world.' It is a world of darkness, and left to itself it will go to destruction, for the wrath of God abideth upon it.

In this lower world man lives a dark and sinful existence. He is "flesh," of the earth earthy, and, as such, cannot translate himself into the world of spirit where there is Light and Life. "Flesh"—the natural man—is powerless in this respect. "The flesh profiteth nothing." Then there is the Devil, the father of lies, who seduces men from reality and brings them into the bondage of sin. In the world man exists in a dark prison out of which he cannot, by any power of his own, escape.

The origin of sin is the Devil, the prince of this world of darkness. He keeps men from the Light. Sin, however, does not really appear in its essential sinfulness till Christ comes into the world—till the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us. Before His coming there had been Light, lightening every man that cometh into the world, but man had failed to receive the Light. But now that the Light has appeared in Christ with such abundant witness, appeared too in the flesh itself, there is no excuse for not receiving it.

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In Christ the Light and the Life are clear and unmistakable. To refuse Christ is sin. It is of this sin that the Jews were guilty. The sin of the world, too, is that it does not believe in Christ.

The Evangelist does not say if or how man can be redeemed from this sin of unbelief or rejection of Christ. He shows, in his Gospel, little evangelistic interest or passion for the salvation of sinners. We have, however, no right to say that he had no such passion. He is writing for believers, that they may have a better understanding and defence of their faith, and like a true literary artist he confines himself to his true purpose.

The supersensible world is the home of God, of Life and Light and Reality, and of God's revealing and creating Word. This world is the home of the great redemptive power, and out of it the Redeemer and His redemption come.

The Conception of God. God, the only true God, is spirit. He possesses life, and is the source of all spiritual life. He is continuously active in His creation. God is, however, only known in so far as He reveals Himself ; and as man, previous to the coming of Christ, has failed

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to attain to a knowledge of God as revealed in the creative Logos, it results that only in Jesus Christ is God known. He, the Incarnate Logos, is the Revealer of a God who is a Father holy and righteous. The presence of Christ in the world of darkness is evidence of God's love for the world. No one really knows God save through Jesus Christ, and only through Him can man come to the Father. Through Christ God is revealed, and through the revelation men are spiritually taken out of this world into the world of spirit and life—into communion with God Himself. In Christ, we see God revealing Himself and redeeming the world.

The Conception of the Person of Christ. The conception of the Person of Christ has diverse elements. Christ is a real human personality. He is given with great frequency in the Gospel the personal name Jesus. He has a mother and brothers in the flesh. He is regarded by friend and foe as the son of Joseph. He is a native of Galilee. He attends a wedding. He is fatigued and thirsty at Sychar. He thirsts on the Cross. He sheds tears of deep grief at the grave of Lazarus. Christ is really human.

But He is more than human. He possesses

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the Spirit in no limited manner. He can read the inmost thoughts of men. He moves amongst men with a royal freedom, and is Himself always master of His circumstances. In the main, these features correspond with the features ascribed to Christ's personality by the earlier Gospels. There are, however, other features peculiar to the Fourth Gospel. Christ possesses the divine glory, which in the days of His flesh is, to a certain degree, veiled, but which He will again recover in its resplendent mightiness. Light, Truth and Life belong to Christ ; He is indeed Himself these realities. By the possession of these attributes He is a being of the eternal and real world. Then Christ lives in the closest union with God. He is the Son of God and God is His Father. He and the Father are one, bound together in the closest intimacy of love and obedience¹, and they are of the same nature and life.

Through His divine, celestial nature and through His close union with God, Christ is able to be the Redeemer of men from the world of flesh, darkness and sin. As the Logos, He possesses the spiritual reality which is life and

¹ The Fourth Gospel, like the other three, has the idea of Christ's sonship through complete moral obedience : but there is also a higher sonship, metaphysical rather than moral.

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salvation ; through His Incarnation, He is able to communicate that reality to men. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer through what He really is. To see and to know Christ is to see and know the Father and that "sufficeth us." It is life eternal to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and the only way to know God is through Jesus Christ. He has revealed the Father.

Various witnesses attest the Truth and Reality, as they are in Jesus. There was the testimony of the Old Testament, the witness of the Baptist, the witness of His Own mighty works, "signs" of His divine power, the witness of His words and personality, and the witness of the Spirit of the Father in the hearts of men. The Reality had an abundant witness. Now that the word had become flesh and had dwelt among men, they had no excuse for their darkness and for rejecting the Light. The revelation was all sufficient.

Christ's Death and Redemptive Work. We may raise here the question of the redemptive value of Christ's death in the Fourth Gospel. The Baptist addresses Jesus as "the Lamb of God" and as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." This public declaration of the Messiahship and of His redemptive

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work on the part of John the Baptist cannot be historical. The historicity of the words, whether or no they were spoken by the Baptist, is, for our consideration, unimportant. The Evangelist has reported the words, and in that way put a certain seal upon them.

As the reported or adopted words of the Evangelist they present two difficulties. The first difficulty is that of integrating them into the general scheme of the Evangelist's thought ; the second difficulty is as to their meaning. Christ, according to the Fourth Evangelist, does not redeem the whole world. He redeems His elect from the sin of the world. The sin of the world is really obdurate unbelief—the unforgivable sin—and it is difficult to see how the world could be redeemed from that. It is of course possible to read the words in the general sense—that it is only through the Lamb of God that the world is saved from going to complete ruin. Perhaps the Fourth Evangelist was not altogether without a missionary interest. He can think of the world as well as of the elect of God.

The second difficulty is as to the meaning. What is the significance of the term “Lamb of God” ? and what is the meaning of the words “take away.”

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It is no doubt true that the "modernist" has here repeated an older orthodox formula, but that does not mean that the formula had no significance for him. The Lamb may connote the meekness of Christ, but that idea does not accord with the portrait of Christ which John gives. More probably it is the idea of sacrifice that is intended. Christ was sacrificed, according to the Fourth Gospel, at Passover. He is the Paschal Lamb in His death. As such, He takes away (not "bears") the sin of the world. Christ's death has a moral, purificatory effect. Christ purifies by His word (xvi. 1), by His deed (the foot-washing), and it is quite natural to suppose that to the Fourth Evangelist His death would have the same value. But no hint is given in the formula put into the Baptist's mouth of *how* Christ's death has this moral and purificatory power.

There are certain passages which appear to summarise all the redemptive work of Christ in His death. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life." "The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep," "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because

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I lay down My life, that I may take it again.” “He (Caiaphas) prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation ; and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad.”

But the Evangelist has no theory to explain the efficacy or value of Christ's death. He only indicates certain diverse effects. Christ, by His death, defeats Satan the prince of this world. Death is the way to the Father and Christ leads in this way, so that His disciples may follow Him. The Death was not for the Fourth Evangelist the offence and scandal that it was to Paul. But, nevertheless, the Cross has for him a certain difficulty. A suffering and dying Logos, though Incarnate, was not an altogether easy problem. He surmounts the difficulty by making Jesus Lord of His own life and death. No one takes His life from Him : He has power to lay it down and power to take it again. The Cross is His Hour and His Glory—an Hour which He Himself has fixed—for through it He returns to His glory and to the fuller exercise of His redemptive power. The great value of Christ's death lies for the Fourth Evangelist in the fact that it restores to Christ His full glory and

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ensures the gathering together and unity of the "children of God that are scattered abroad."

After all, it is upon the Life of Jesus that the Evangelist concentrates his thought, no doubt with a profounder insight into the meaning of the Life, made possible by Paul's doctrine of the Cross. The Death completes the Life. It is the finish of the work. "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." But the finish is also the beginning of greater work.

There is one element in Christ's redemptive work which should not be left unnoticed. Christ is Judge. Men, as it were automatically, judge themselves by their attitude to Him, reveal their character and fix their destiny. And this work of judgment does not cease when Jesus returns to His glory : it is part of the work of the Holy Spirit, the only work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the outside world.

The Conditions of Redemption. In the Fourth Gospel redemption is offered to all without distinction of creed or nationality. Christ is the Redeemer of Greeks and Samaritans as well as of Jews. The redemptive outlook is universal. But, in spite of this universalistic outlook, it is not the case that all men will be redeemed.

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Jesus knows beforehand the souls destined for salvation, and He guards them with such care that only the son of perdition is lost. There are elect souls that are given by God to Christ, or are chosen by Christ Himself for redemption from the world and its sin. No one comes to Christ, except the Father draw him. The same idea of election is seen in the fact that faith arises inevitably in the children of God or the children of the Light. This is genuine predestination. But here again as with Paul, it is the predestination of the religious man who is convinced that he owes his redemption to God and to God alone, and who endeavours to make his assurance doubly sure by giving to it a dogmatic or metaphysical foundation.

But the elect, though predestined to salvation, are not saved unconditionally : they must believe. Faith¹ is an essential condition for Redemption. To believe in Jesus Christ is to work the work of God. The object of faith is Christ, His words and His works, and God who sent Him. Faith itself is in the Fourth Gospel a complex notion. There is an intellectual element in it; to believe is to confess that Jesus is the Christ and the Son

¹ Faith (*πίστις*) does not occur in the IVth Gospel, but the verb (*πιστεύειν*) is frequent.

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of God. It is the result of a previous experience. Thus, faith is the result of experiencing a miracle; it is not, as in the synoptic Gospels, the condition. In the Fourth Gospel men see the miracle and then believe. But faith is not a purely intellectual judgment or confession. It is very closely allied with knowledge and obedience. Belief is, in one place at least, the gateway into knowledge—"Believe the works that ye may know and understand that the Father is in Me and I in the Father"—just as obedience is the gateway into knowledge—"If any willeth, he shall know of the doctrine." Faith is spiritual intuition, moral obedience and the expressed conviction of truth. It is to come to Christ and to confess Him as the Son of God and to find in Him eternal life. "He that believeth hath eternal life." Faith, indeed, is not simply the condition of redemption—it is redemption itself. It is "the way" and "the door" into union with Christ Himself. In the last resort all this experience of faith, knowledge and obedience resolves itself into love—the Love of Christ for His own and of them for Him.

A new birth is also presented as the condition of redemption. "Except a man be born from above he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

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Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." This doctrine of the new birth has two sources. It goes back to the thought, perhaps to the very words, of Jesus. "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." It also goes back to Paul's conception of Baptism into Christ. What the Evangelist is trying to express through the adoption of the idea, is the necessity for a profound change, for a change not simply in the way of life but of life itself, of the very nature of a man. The bad tree has to become good in its very roots.

This profound change of nature and life takes place at Baptism through the water and the working of the Spirit of God. Without the working of the Spirit, a man does not see ; without the water, he does not enter the Kingdom of God. The new birth, then, through the Spirit and the Sacrament is an essential condition of redemption. Here again the condition is also the reality, that is to say, when a man is born again, he is redeemed.

Faith and the new birth, then, are means by which is established a very close union with Christ. But there is another way by which this

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union is effected, namely, the way of the Sacraments. The rite of Baptism does not seem to be of prime importance to John. He says that Jesus Himself did not baptize, yet baptism with water and the Spirit is the condition of entering into the Kingdom. It was the initial rite of the Christian life. But the Eucharist has a high value ; it is a veritable condition of union with Christ. In the sixth chapter the Evangelist emphasizes the necessity of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves." "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him." "My flesh is true food and My blood is true drink." "He that eateth Me, that one shall verily live by Me."

There were evidently some to whom this doctrine was unacceptable. And so, in spite of having stressed the necessity of communicating in the flesh and blood, he modifies his doctrine at the expense of doctrinal consistency. If this realistic doctrine of flesh and blood were unacceptable, then those who found it so had another "objective reality" in "the words" which are Spirit and Life. In obedience to the words man could become truly one with Christ. The

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flesh; in itself, profits nothing. The Spirit is everything. No matter then, whether it be by flesh and blood or by words, the thing of real importance is to make real contact with the life-giving Spirit of Christ.

In the passage (John vi. 60-70) the Evangelist may have possibly had in view some Petrine group of Christians who were not inclined to sacramentarianism, or perhaps he and his readers knew of some difficulty which Peter himself had regarding the efficacy of the Eucharist. Peter may have felt difficulty, but he did not on that account turn from Christ. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life." Let the prosaic, matter-of-fact members of the Church then follow his example. The Evangelist himself may have been a High Churchman, but he was not bigoted. He would have confessed that both Catholic and Quaker may have the true life.

In the story of the foot-washing (xiii. 3-10) the Eucharist seems to be presented as a complementary means of purification after baptism. Peter "saith unto him, Lord dost thou wash (*νίπτεις*) my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter. Peter

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This sacramentarian doctrine which is found in both Paul and John may not be very attractive to the staunch Protestant. We have to remember, however, that the distinction between "symbol" and "reality" was not so clear to the ancient—if

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indeed it was ever envisaged at all by him—as it is to the modern Protestant who talks of “mere” symbols. To the ancient, symbol and reality were practically one.¹

The New Life through the Spirit. The life of the believer is one of closest intimacy with Christ. He is no longer a servant, but the friend of Christ. He still beholds his Lord after He has left the world, and still lives under His care and protection against the persecution of the world. This care and protection are carried on by means of the Spirit. No definition of the Spirit is given, nor is His relation to the Father or the Son exactly expressed. It is only His practical working and influence on the Church that is presented. Indeed, the conception of the Spirit is not strictly necessary to the Evangelist's thought. He may have taken over the conception out of loyalty to Paul and the traditional teaching. On the world the Spirit exercises no power but that of judgment. Through the conception of the Spirit, however, John has completely spiritualized the older

¹ It is needless to say that the interpretation of John VI as referring to the Eucharist is widely accepted by New Testament scholars. For the Eucharist in John's Gospel, cf Goguel 'L'Eucharistie,' who takes the foot-washing, the marriage at Cana and the piercing of the side of Jesus as allegorical references to the Eucharist.

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eschatology with its idea of a future judgment. Through the Spirit, judgment is already in the world, and eternal life is here and now in the actual experience of the believer.

The Spirit leads men into truth. He takes of the things of Christ and reveals their abiding meaning. He lives with men for ever. He is Christ in the hearts of the disciples—the immanent Christ bearing witness to Jesus and to the eternal Christ at the right hand of God. He is the very spirit of reality and He is the Comforter. He declares things to come. He reveals the Father.

Under the inspiration of the Spirit—Christ's *alter ego*, the Christ of the soul, the believer lives a life of prevailing prayer, of loving service that bears much and abiding fruit, of freedom, joy and peace. He receives blessings which the world cannot give and cannot take away. He lives in a real world with God and His Christ. His life is a veritable prolongation of the life of Christ. "Because I live, ye shall live also." It is a life of social service. Friends of Christ, the believers are friends of one another. In a word, the new life is divine ; it is love, joy and peace.

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The Fourth Gospel is the profound expression of an experience created by Christ Himself. This expression may have been modified, perhaps hampered, by certain apologetic or polemical aims which the author had in mind when he undertook to write his Gospel. It has certainly been affected by the adoption of the Alexandrine philosophy and by the Logos doctrine in particular. No doubt the Logos doctrine had an apologetic intention, namely, to interpret Christianity to the Greek mind or to those who had been influenced by Hellenic modes of thinking. But the adoption of the doctrine was not all gain : it tended to sublimate Christ into a transcendental and divine being who lacks the humanness, and especially the tender compassion of the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus is not in the Fourth Gospel the friend of publicans and sinners. He is exalted to a spiritual height that takes Him out of the limits of humanity. Jesus is Spirit rather than flesh and blood. He is not touched by the ordinary course of events. He is omniscient and omnipotent. His miracles are not deeds of compassion wrought for the saving of the soul and body of suffering humanity ; they are revelations of power and divinity. True, the Word became Flesh, and the Fourth Evan-

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gelist tells us that He was wearied, that He thirsted, that He wept—facts which the author perhaps emphasizes, because he felt that he had so presented the divine and transcendent in Jesus as almost to hide His humanity.

But in spite of the influences of philosophy, there emanates from the Gospel the impression of a deep and real spiritual experience of the moral and redeeming power of Jesus. Jesus brings men to God the Father, and gives to them the spirit of true life and sonship. He lifts them above the things of this world into a spiritual reality where there is joy and peace. He teaches men to love one another as He Himself has loved them, and if, in the Fourth Gospel, He gives no command to love the sinner and the outcast, that may be because there was no necessity. Through Jesus man triumphs over the world, flesh and sin, and is brought into true communion with God and man. And this is redemption which is caused originally by the love of God which sends His Son into the world, who so unites Himself with man that they behold Him for what He is, and beholding, believe on Him, and believing, become one with Him. To be redeemed is to have the mind and spirit of Christ ; it is to live in Christ and to

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PART II

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PART II

I. Sin

IT was once said to the present writer, "You parsons talk a great deal about sin, and it is the one thing you know least about." The criticism was not meant unkindly, and it was quite sincere ; and, where there is sincerity and kindliness, there is a certain amount, at least, of truth. There may be a great deal of talk of an abstract kind which is not very convincing of sin or of anything else. In a certain sense, too, the latter half of the criticism is true. There is a great mystery in the sin of men, and that mystery pervades every particular sin that any man commits ; but in spite of the mystery and the vague talk there are certain things about sin which a man, honest with himself, will know and count among the certain facts of life. It is these certain facts that I want to write down, and with the sincerity of proved, personal conviction.

The first certainty is that sin is a fact of reality. Most people in their ordinary moments admit that;—the ordinary man, when he is his ordinary self, grants the fact of sin. He knows

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that there is a policeman on the street ; that there are such things as drunkenness, debauchery, cheating, and that these things are not altogether rarities : he finds too, that the human literature he reads recognizes sin—makes it a pivotal point in the human drama—and the ordinary man would not regard the literature as human unless it did ; and he sees pictures—the moving kind—and plays which by no means hide the fact of sin, and he has no fault to find with the truth of the presentation, whether or no he finds it a purification,—a ‘*κάθαρσις*,’—as Aristotle said it should be. There are, too, some people called saints, who *are* saints and who could convince the ordinary man of the fact of sin with a greater conviction than can come from the mean facts of life or from literature or drama, but the ordinary man is probably not dependent on the saints for evidence which might be to him too precious or profound.

But not always has the ordinary man the same sure conviction. I speak as an ordinary man. There are certain personal things in life, in his own life, which the ordinary man does not like. They offend his moral pride, they rob him of that moral conceit, or shall we say self-respect ? which is necessary for him to walk erect and with

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firm step the paths of life. He would have a lighter heart if he could argue these offending personal matters out of existence. They are vulgar and mean and shabby. And he begins to argue. He argues with the words "heredity," "environment," "circumstances"; he may take a wider sweep and argue with the word "evolution." The more high-sounding the words are, the better, for knowledge and the words of knowledge are very flattering things, and have almost but never quite, the power to recover a lost pride. Even the extraordinary man is not altogether impervious to the flattery of knowledge. "Evolution" may hint that there is no such thing as sin but only imperfection which is the necessary stepping-stone to perfection's heights. And so the ordinary man argues the personal offences out of existence. He is not a sinner, certainly not so profound a sinner as he thought; he is only a creature of circumstances or a pilgrim that entered into the night so that he might emerge into a brighter day. The personal offences remain, but they are not what he thought them and called them—"sins." They are inevitable episodes in life which must always lead a chequered career.

The argument may not be quite conclusive;

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but it has a probability, and that satisfies the ordinary man for a season. But only for a season, if he is honest with himself, and the ordinary man usually is. The argument comes up against certain personal convictions which he had forgotten for a time, of which he is quite sure and is by no means inclined to abandon. He was sure that he was a man, and a free man, with a power of personal action ; he knew and knows that he can be things and do things of himself, and what he can be and do is his own action. This "knowledge" or "science" has deprived him, however, of the power of personal action. It has taken from him far more than it has given him. It has invaded his personal being, his very manhood, and left it mutilated. That is not very flattering; this "knowledge" gave back, on rather uncertain foundations, one's pride, but it robs him of another, greater pride, the pride of being a man at all.

If he has a sense of humour, he will see the humour of the situation, for what has this "knowledge" and all its argument made him—a marionette moved by the string of circumstance, trotted up and down the stage of life, made to do this thing and the other thing, whether he likes it or not, quite a laughable little object in the great

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evolutionary scheme, an amusing bit of flotsam on the stream of circumstances. And the ordinary man does not like to be ridiculous ; and, though he may be at times, he will never believe that he was meant to be always ridiculous, nothing but the plaything of things. He would rather be a sinner than that.

These reflections call for a revision of the argument which founds on "heredity," "environment," and "evolution." Further consideration reveals that the so-called scientific foundations on which the ordinary man tries to build are not too secure. His great-great-grandfather may have been too much given to strong liquors, but the ordinary man is quite sure that when he himself was drunk, it was himself that was drunk and not his bibulous ancestor, and he has no assurance that, if his ancestry had been different, he himself would not have been, on a particular occasion, in a shameful state of intoxication. "He has only got *himself* to blame" is the common judgment. It may be quite true that certain passions or propensities which appear in one generation have a tendency to appear in the next or even in the third or fourth generation, but these "inherited" propensities are only the stuff with which the second and later generations have to deal, they are not the real

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actors in the situation. If a man yields to them, the yielding is his ; if he fights and defeats them, his is the victory.

No one doubts the influence of environment on the happiness, the tastes, the decencies of life, and on the formation of character. But no one can deceive himself so far as to believe that environment is the cause of the personal action which men call sin. The slums do not sin, though the dweller in them frequently may, while, on the other hand, he may and frequently does not. Would the sinner of the slums cease to sin if he were transplanted into Belgravia ? I heard a man of learning say the other day that we pity and excuse to-day the man who lives in the slums ; but, fifty years from now, we may be pitying a man and excusing him because he was born and bred in the West End. It is not environment that is guilty of what we call sins.

As for evolution, however much of interest it may have to teach us about man's long history from small and even crude beginnings, it will never convince man that he is not himself, with thoughts and feelings and deeds of his own for which he is responsible ; and, if there are thoughts and feelings and deeds in his experience which he calls sins, these sins are his own, and

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it is in large measure because they are his own, the result of his own personal action, that he calls them sins.

It is not possible to argue the fact of personal sin out of existence.

We may take it for granted, then, that sin is a fact ; more than that, it is a personal fact—it is a man's own self that sins, he himself is the sinner. But why do we call certain personal actions sinful ? Why do we call the person who is the agent of these actions—whose indeed the actions are—a sinner ? What is the authority for this judgment of value ? The authority for most occasions is custom or tradition. Our guides and teachers or parents called those actions sinful, and we agree. Or the Bible or the Church condemns those actions as wrong, and we agree. There is, I believe, more in our judgment than submission to authority or tradition. It is *we* who have agreed ; and we are not automata, mechanically registering our dissents or assents, but reasoning and thinking beings, who have thought and reasoned, to some extent at least, before we agree to any authority.

But why do our guides and teachers, the Bible and the Church and every decent person, say this particular action is a sin, and that man is, in that

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particular action, sinning, a sinner? What is a sin? What is a sinner?

What is a sin? Can we find a definition? I take a definition or description of sin from Psychology. The definition is made by contrasting sin with moral disease. "Finally, we must distinguish between moral disease and sin. There is a definite place for the idea of sin as distinct from moral disease . . ." "The essential difference psychologically between sin and moral disease is that sin is due to wrong sentiments, moral disease is due to morbid complexes giving rise to uncontrollable impulses . . ." The difference between moral diseases and sins may be recognized, even apart from expert judgment, by the following characteristics: First, the moral disease has a *compulsive character*, not characteristic of the sin which is more deliberate. Secondly, sin is under the control of the will, whereas the victim of moral disease finds his will absolutely impotent to resist it. Thirdly, the sinner, as such, does not want to be cured, whereas the victim of moral disease, if he realizes that cure is possible, is anxious to obtain it.¹

To take the illustration adduced. The

¹ Hadfield, "Psychology and Morals."

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drunkard deliberately chooses to get drunk : he is a sinner ; the "alcoholic" does not wish to get drunk, but moved by irresistible impulse he does so : he is not a sinner, he is morally diseased. Now I think I understand the distinction. I know a man who gets drunk at stated periods ; between the fixed times he is a good worker and a teetotaler ; I know another who is rarely quite sober and sometimes, alas ! quite drunk. The former is a sinner ; the latter is morally diseased. There is, of course, a difference between the two, and it may be a useful distinction for the psychotherapist, and for ordinary people who try to help such as may be overtaken with a fault. But, apart from that, I am afraid I find the distinction more confusing than illuminating as to the nature of sin. The man who has his stated times does not "deliberately choose" at those times to get drunk. The times come round, and he cannot resist the alluring invitation, and perhaps he is as much ashamed of himself as the morally diseased alcoholic. Does any human being ever deliberately choose sin as sin ? Does any man *ever* act with "no compulsion except that of deliberate choice" ? If only actions which are the result of deliberate choice are to be called sins, and actions which are due to weak-

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ness of will, to lack of power of resistance, are not sins, but moral diseases, then the actions which we call sinful are so few that it is scarcely worth while to trouble any more about them. I do not think we get very far in understanding what sin is, by comparing it or contrasting it with disease.¹

To take another definition. "A sin must always possess the following characteristics. Firstly, it must be a violation of moral law, an aberration from an ethical standard or ideal. Secondly, the law of which a given act, capable of being imputed as sin, is an outward or objective transgression, must be known or be capable of being known, and known as binding upon himself by the agent. Thirdly, until virtue be won, there must be two lines of conduct open to the actor, to each of which he is impelled by impulses of different intensity and moral value. And, lastly, the activity must be the outcome of intention, and of choice characterized by the freedom which the subject's will possesses. These conditions may be summed in one word—accountability."²

These words give us a very lucid analysis

¹ See detached Note 1 on Sin and Disease.

² Dr. F. R. Tennant "The Concept of Sin" p. 209 f., *op. id.* p. 245.

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of the conditions which pertain to moral action, though I confess to the difficulty of finding any action which we commonly call moral or immoral to which the conditions perfectly and completely apply. Again, is there not in every action which we call sin a religious reference ? This is so in the Old Testament ; sin is something with which God has to do ; and it is even more markedly so in the New Testament. Our teachers and guides and the Christian Church never left out the religious element, and even in the judgments of every day there is always a religious reference implicit, if not explicit. And if we leave out the religious element or characteristic, have we completely defined what sin is ?

Perhaps a definition of sin is impossible. Sin is personal action, it is a personal experience, it is part of life, and life and experience do not fall easily within the limits of definition. Definition is not a good interpreter of the meaning of life.¹

Here, then, we come to our second fact regarding sin—it is something with which God is concerned. When we speak of immorality it is something with which Society is concerned (and upon which Society expresses its judgment) ; similarly, crime is the concern of the State,

¹ See note on the Definition of Sin.

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while vice is a thing of Nature. Sin is supremely the concern of God ; if it were not so, we would be content with a lower term, or the term "sin" would mean for us less than it does. Of course, it is not meant that God is not concerned with immorality, crime and vice, but when we bring these things into relation with God, and feel that His condemnation is upon them, they become more than immorality, crime and vice, they become sins. If there were no God, or if we had no knowledge of Him, there might be perhaps immoralities, crimes and vices in the world, but there would be for us no sin. When we say "sin" it is of God's relation to the action or experience that we are thinking.

The essence of sin in the New Testament is personal separation from God ; it is a turning of the back upon God ; it is leaving Him, the Spirit of Love and Right, of Beauty and Truth. That is why sin is loveless and wrong, ugly and false. Sin is godlessness. That is the conception of the New Testament and of all serious Christian thinking, and behind every common judgment upon sin and the sinner—however loosely the terms may be used in common speech, there is always the thought of God. As Anselm said, "there is something infinite about sin."

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The relation of God to sin can only be one of absolute opposition—the opposition of love to selfishness, of right to wrong, of beauty to ugliness, of truth to falsehood. And these oppositions are not abstract—the oppositions of ideas—they are intensely personal. We do not like to say that God hates the sinner. We say that He loves the sinner and hates his sin. When we so say, not only is our psychology wrong, for sin cannot exist except in relation to the sinner, but, what is worse, our morality is wrong and distinctly anæmic. We are not strong enough to hate nobly. Our hate is too often spite, jealousy, envy, the result of narrow-minded egotistical prejudice, is itself sinful. God's hate is the hate of the very spirit of love and righteousness, beauty and truth. It is of the Spirit, not of the flesh.

Why does man sin? Why is he a sinner?

These questions raise the old problem of philosophy and theology as to the origin of sin. No satisfactory solution has ever been found. The Fall of Adam, the evolution of "The Idea" from innocence to sin, an extra-temporal act of the will, a pre-natal choice of evil, the lowly brute origin of man, the social evil influences into which man is born, have all been tried as original causes and found wanting. The origin

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of sin is an inscrutable mystery. But while we humbly and truly acknowledge the mystery, we may yet say something.

It is well to remember that the only realities to which the term "cause" can be properly applied are Persons. That reduces the possible cause of sin to two, to either God or man (or perhaps to God *and* man). We may leave out of account the Devil and his angels, if these are personalities; they are the sufficient cause of their own sins. But God cannot be the cause either by Himself or in association with man. God is excluded by His very nature. Of man's sins man alone can be the cause—even if he has sinned by alliance with the Devil, for it takes two to make an alliance, and man must be responsible for his own sinful share. Man is the origin of man's sins.

If we try to pursue the question further and ask why man is the cause of sin, we can only answer because he is man, personally imperfect himself and living in an imperfect world, yet somehow personally allied with or united to God, for in his sinning he personally separates himself from God, and all his sins are manifestations of this personal separation.¹

¹ This is not quite satisfactory, and really begs the question, for it is not the imperfection of man or the imperfection of the world that sins. It is man that sins, and he is the sole cause of his sinning.

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Every attempt, then, to find the cause or origin of human sin seems to drive us back to the simple fact that the sinner sins ; his sins are his own ; he is their cause.

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Are all men sinners ?

Much of the speculative search for the origin of sin has been due to the desire to find some fact in man's history, nature or conditions that would account for, and confirm the truth of the universality of sin. But no origin of sin outside man's personal self has been found. We cannot, to-day, logically deduce the universality of sin from the Fall of Adam, nor can we deduce it from our lowly natural origin and our present connexion with what is earthy. The natural man (his impulses and desires) may be the food of the sinner, what Dr. Tennant calls the *fomes peccati*, but what is one man's sinful poison might be another's righteous meat. When we simply say that man is the cause of his sin, no doubt the universality of sin is implied, but it is not proved.

The commonplace truth, "all men are sinners," cannot then be logically deduced, nor can it be proved by an induction. Some may accept it on the authority of the Bible, others on the authority of Christ, others on the authority of

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the common conscience. The majority simply accept the fact, and never find they have made a mistake. But there is none the less an internal witness. The more a man rises in the scale of true goodness, the more convinced he becomes of his own sinfulness, and he is convinced too, that should he rise to yet higher heights, he will still judge himself a sinner. He knows, too, that the saints who are more righteous than he, judge themselves to be sinners. The universality of sin is with the Christian saint, at least, not a dogma or an easily accepted commonplace. It has its witness in experience.

The facts regarding sin which we accept then are :

- (i) Sin is a fact, a personal reality.
- (ii) Sin is a personal separation from God, a separation with which God is supremely concerned and which He can only condemn.
- (iii) Man is the cause of his sin ; his sins are his and his alone.
- (iv) All men are sinners.

These four facts may be of common, even of commonplace, knowledge. But if we know these facts, the knowledge is not and could not be

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from self alone. To know these facts concerning sin is proof that the Light has shone. In His Light we have seen what we have seen. The consciousness or knowledge of personal sin is often a bitter experience, but it could not be without God. We could not know that God condemns sin without knowing something of the mind of God. In learning the truth about sin we approach the Spirit of God, and His Spirit approaches ours. We have begun to see actuality *sub specie Æternitatis*—in the Light of God. The knowledge of sin is the beginning of redemption. It is the revelation to us of Divine Truth.

To say truly "I am a sinner separate from God and with His condemnation upon me" is better than to say or think "I have no sin" ; for, in the latter case we are self-deluded, and the truth is not in us. When sin comes home the Truth has come ; we have seen Light.

NOTE ON SIN AND DISEASE

There is a tendency in the present day to identify certain sins with disease. The tendency is due to a growing naturalistic interpretation of life, to a weak sentimentalism and to a genuine pity for the sinner. The tendency once begun will, no doubt, be to do so more and more, till

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all sin is identified with disease. But, however far the identification may go or may have gone, it strikes clean across the sentiments of moral approval and disapproval. These sentiments have had a gradual growth, have arisen out of experience and have an impregnable place in human thought. We must grant to them truth and rationality. But if all sin, or a large part of sin, is disease then these sentiments seem irrational and are wrong.

Disease may be the natural consequence of sin. In the case of the alcoholic, his alcoholism is a manifestation of sinful action ; it is not the sinning or the sin, rather he himself is the sin. Behind the alcoholism there is an acting self ; is that self sinful or is it simply diseased ? I believe the former is the fuller and therefore more lucid diagnosis. That "self" as a sinfully acting person must be condemned by the alcoholic, not simply pitied as an innocent sufferer.

There is a distinction that may be made between sin and disease. Disease or physical affliction may not in all cases be an absolute and complete evil, it may be a condition of virtue, of personal and vicarious sacrifice. But sin is an absolute evil always. The bad will or the bad man is the one absolutely bad thing in the world.

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So long as he is bad, no good thing can arise out of his badness.

Jesus seems to have regarded disease as the result of sinning, though not necessarily and immediately as the result of sinning on the part of the sufferer or even of his parents. When He heals, He does so as the Saviour of men. And it may be that, if sin be separation from God, disease will largely, if not altogether, disappear, when that separation is completely and universally annulled.

NOTE ON THE DEFINITION OF SIN

There are difficulties in any concept or definition of sin, and these are not in Dr. Tennant's definition due to any lack of logical clearness or to the incomplete analysis of sin's conditions. The difficulties arise out of the very nature of the case. Sin is a human experience and the knowledge of its meaning is a growing one. At what point in the knowledge of sin are we to try to define it? Shall we take sin as Christ has revealed it, as it is presented in the New Testament? Shall we regard it *sub specie Scientiæ* or *Philosophiæ* or *sub specie Æternitatis*? It is from Christ's point of view which is also *sub specie*

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Æternitatis, that we get to the real essence and meaning of sin.

One of the conditions of sin in Dr. Tennant's "Concept" is knowledge, knowledge of the law of righteousness binding upon the sinner. But do we never sin in ignorance? Ritschl held that sin was due to ignorance. The reason of the difficulty is that we cannot *define* experience, or any part of experience, which is too complex and varied to submit to the limits of definition.

THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN

We have left the punishment of sin for separate and brief treatment.

A man is convicted by the judge of a crime, and is made to suffer in person or property. Or a man offends against the social code, and suffers in loss of reputation and position. Or he offends against the laws of nature, and he suffers in physical health. Such suffering may be, and is, quite rightly regarded as the punishment or part of the punishment of his sin.

But this suffering is contingent; it is not inevitable. A man may break the law of the land, and never stand in the dock. He may act in an unsocial manner, and not be found out. He

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may break the laws of health, and have antidotes and quickly recover, perhaps never actually suffer at all.

But there is one punishment which no man can escape, the degradation of his soul and the destruction of his personality. In all his sinning man is personally separating himself from God, from the Spirit of Love and Right, Truth and Beauty ; and, as it is only in union with that Spirit that his true personality lives and develops, he is in his sinning destroying his real self. From that destruction no power in heaven or on earth can save the sinner, so long as he sins.

If men realized what is the inevitable consequence of their sinning, no man could ever sin with a light heart; but the inevitable consequence is just the one consequence of sin which we realize least, and the more we yield to sin, the less and less capable do we become of realizing it. A man may eat and drink and be merry, while all the time his soul is dying. The capacity for self-deception in man is almost infinite.

This inevitable consequence of sin is not confined to what we call great sins or flagrant iniquities. It comes upon our worldliness and our moodiness and our vanities, upon sins of omission and commission. Sin is always self-

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robbery. Every sin is a personal damage. "No man," said Burke, "had ever a point of pride that was not injurious to himself."

And the consequence acts with universal and iron necessity. So long as the sinning continues, the consequence continues in its depersonalizing, dehumanizing, devitalizing power till, maybe, the soul dies, the person becomes extinct, man becomes solely of the earth earthy, a thing, no longer a living spirit. The consequence begins in the sinner now ; it goes on until the soul that liveth, it shall die.

There is yet another consequence of sin.

A man sins in ignorance or in knowledge, in cold wilfulness or in passion's heat ; he may go on sinning for years, when, one day, a Light breaks forth, and he sees something of what he is doing, sees the sorrow he is bringing upon others, the robbery he is committing against the life and soul of those whom he loves, the vulgarity of his sin and his soul. In that moment his punishment seems greater than he can bear ; he cannot stand the light of day, nor the vision of himself. That moment may or may not come to every sinner, some time in this world, or somehow in some other world of God's preparing. God alone knoweth. If and when it

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does come, it is the hour of punishment and of judgment, the hour of great awakening. It is the hour when God's Spirit begins to demand and to pay the great price of redemption.

To one of two hours the sinner, soon or late, will be driven. To the hour of doom when he that is unjust shall be unjust still, and he that is filthy shall be filthy still ; or to the hour of great awakening when out of bitter throes new life is born.

II. Repentance

THE knowledge of sin comes, as we have seen, from a vision of the good and right ; and the truer and more complete the vision, the truer and more complete will be the knowledge of sin. In Christian experience, for instance, it is the vision of the true and good, as these have been revealed in Jesus Christ, that reveals to us the Christian meaning of our sin and sinning. That same vision of the true and good, from which the knowledge of sin comes, is also the source of all true repentance.

But it must not be thought that Repentance is always set in motion by some high spiritual vision, when the soul, in its strength, is exalted and filled with the beauty, joy and strength of some ideal. Repentance, in ordinary life, does not, as a rule, start from the mountain height, but from very much lowlier levels. It begins often in the swamps and quagmires of moral life.

A man, for instance, has been pursuing some unworthy course of action. Apart from occasional twinges of conscience, the intervals between

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which grow wider and wider, he experiences no discomfort. No one seems much the worse ; no one is any the wiser. He has argued with himself, so that he almost believes his unworthy conduct is not unworthy, for it has so many "extenuating circumstances." He is able to find so many excuses which quickly become, in his thinking, real causes, and so make his unworthy conduct "inevitable." Or it may be, the unworthy conduct becomes mingled with the rest of his moral experience which is not completely bad, and loses, in that way, its simple black and becomes grey, and what more could a man hope for in a moral way than to be grey, unless he hopelessly and foolishly aspires for virtue that is too good for human nature's daily food ?

But something happens. The unworthy conduct breaks the bounds which, so far, have been set to it. It breaks out in an act that makes a decent man ashamed. He finds himself and his sin out, and sees them in their simple vulgarity. Or it may be, someone else finds out, and then there is another point of view, unprejudiced and impartial, which cannot be ignored but must be reckoned with. Consequences, perhaps, begin to fall ; the pleasantness is turned into bitterness, and the stolen fruit becomes ashes in the mouth.

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This is the hard experience of a man's sin finding him out.

But in this moment—truly no mountain height but rather a swamp—the man may, in honest sorrow, condemn himself. He can only do so, however, through a light of righteousness that for long may have been in eclipse, but now breaks forth again, and reveals to him what he, in his unworthiness, veritably is. He would gladly turn from the light into the shade of the old, careless, unworthy way. But he knows now that however safe that way once seemed, it is dangerous ; and however strewn with flowers it may have been, they wither and their breath is decay and poison to the soul. The Light has dawned.

What is he to do ? He can, of course, turn his back to the Light and walk again in the paths of darkness. He may cry "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." But the Light does not depart—he dare not let it depart—and, in its illumination, he receives the condemnation and makes it his own. But the rays of the Light that has shone are not all compact of condemnation. The Light contains rays of love as well as rays of righteousness. And with the Light that is compact of righteousness and love he

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faces the moral situation. He turns from the old unworthiness into new paths. The Light is his and he must walk in it. It has transformed him. The old things pass away and new begin. He is himself a new creation. He has repented.

This is but a particular instance, and, though stated in general terms, no unreal one of repentance. What really has taken place? The man has allied himself to a new spirit and life, and, so long as that alliance is true and is maintained, he is another man. Something deeper and more lasting than remorse has taken place. Remorse is the bitter regret for things we have been or not been, for things we have done or not done. It is sorrow for the pain we have caused others, and chiefly sorrow for our own pain. It reveals a change in our emotions. In itself, however, it may be without moral quality, the result of circumstances, and especially of finding that the way of transgressors is hard. And remorse contains no guarantee of a more moral future. And something deeper and more personal than reformation has occurred. In reformation a man changes his action or attitude. He may have found that methods of dishonesty do not pay, and he resolves to follow a stricter honesty. But this is not repentance. He

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once walked in the light of a mean prudence, he walks in that light still. He is just the same, mean and self-interested. His meanness and self-interest have taken a new direction, but he himself remains personally what he was.

Repentance is not simply an emotion, though it may be accompanied by a contrition of heart that is the deepest emotion the soul can know. It is not a change of action or attitude, though it never occurs without change of action and attitude. Repentance is a new spirit. A new will and a new heart have come. Repentance is regeneration. But it can only come through union with a new and another spirit : a spirit that was not there, now is there. A man who was there has ceased to be. A new man has arisen.

In the particular instance which we have described, there are accidental elements which are not essential to repentance in itself. This must necessarily be the case whenever a particular instance is taken to reveal the elements of repentance. This particular instance may seem to contain the elements of suddenness and moral upheaval. And no doubt many repentances are sudden or appear so, and many are attended by emotional upheaval. But these elements are

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accidental, and are not of the essence of repentance. Repentance may come slowly and calmly.

Repentance is essentially one with every act of righteousness and with all moral progress. In moral progress there is the maintenance of union with a higher spirit of righteousness ; in every act of righteousness there is an assertion of the union, even though in most cases the assertion is unconscious. In our ordinary thought, no doubt, we make a distinction between orderly moral progress and repentance. Ordinary moral life may be calm like the river, as it broadens out and placidly flows to meet the sea. But in the higher reaches there are places where the river, held up by rock and boulder, swirls in fury, or where it rushes through the straight gorge, or falls into deep and silent pools. And in the river of our moral life, it is the same ; the flow is not always calm and of the same intensity ; there are deep and silent places and places of swelling tumult. And all rivers are not alike, for some have to fight their way, and others flow past pleasant fields with scarce an obstacle to the sea. So vary the lives of men, some are serene with only here and there a deeper pool, while others have to struggle and agonize on the way to peace. But as it is the same laws that con-

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dition the meandering stream, the rushing gorge and silent pool, so the same essentials belong to repentance, moral progress and all righteousness. Repentance and moral progress are two forms of the same reality. There is in both a condemnation of the evil and a cleaving to the good. And the evil and the good are not "things" ; they are Spirit and they are Life.

The supreme fact, however, is that in repentance a new personality appears. There has been an inrush of new life. And there the illustration seems to break down. A new figure is required. The evil tree has become good ; it no longer bears evil fruit ; it bears good fruit. There has been the personal revelation of new life and the personal receiving of it.

The proof of the reality of repentance rests upon the testimony of the repentant's own heart and conscience, and upon manifestations of the new Life which he and others can test. To argue for the possibility of the fact of repentance seems almost idle. Every appeal to nobler living and nobler sacrifice is based upon the possibility of repentance. Without it, moral life would have no meaning, and life for many would be reduced to moral doom. There are few of us who do not

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know in our experience, or who have not seen in others, the working of new life. And yet, there are some theories of human experience on which the radical change that repentance implies would be quite impossible.

For instance, repentance is impossible on any theory of determinism, rigid or elastic. On all such theories man is the creature of physical and psychical forces that may change him, but he cannot change, radically and personally, of himself. Repentance implies that man is free to determine himself and the whole quality of his life. But repentance is just one of those facts of life upon which all determinism must founder. Repentance is a new personal beginning, and determinism has no place for new personal beginnings. The ship of Determinism is wrecked on the rock of the Repentant Life.

Then there are some explanations of repentance itself which, while they ostensibly admit the fact of repentance, really explain it away. It has been explained by the uprush of certain impulses from the subconscious to the conscious self. This uprush, it is said, most frequently takes place at the period of adolescence. But, apart from the fact that repentance does not always take place at adolescence, but is an experi-

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ence sometimes of maturity and even of hoar years, there are serious difficulties connected with such an explanation. We do not know that the impulses which make for repentance and which must be good influences, reside in the subconscious self. The psychologists who have gone to the subconscious self for the explanation of human experience, have, as a rule, not made the subconscious the abode of angels of light, but rather the abode of treacherous devils. But, even if we knew that there was an angel of light in the subconscious self, we should have to explain his presence there, the how and whence of his coming—and also his decision to appear at a certain moment in the conscious self, to take command and to transform. Whether or no a repentant who had been transformed by the appearance of the subconscious angel, would or could call his repentance his own—whether he himself could say “I have repented” is a doubtful matter. The weakness of the whole explanation seems to rest in trying to account for the known by the unknown, or, at least, by what is matter of very doubtful experience.

Another explanation is that repentance is a triumph of the good self over the evil self. Men are regarded as being, or as having, two person-

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alities, a good and an evil, and, in repentance, the good personality is said to take command and, by a kind of exorcism, or in some moral and rational way, to expel the evil. Now, of course, there are good and bad in us all. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde has significance for most of us. But Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde would have no moral interest for any of us unless Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde were one person, and unless Dr. Jekyll were really responsible for becoming Mr. Hyde and for all Mr. Hyde's conduct. Each man is *one* self, and it is that one total self that becomes changed in repentance. If each man were a distinct and separate good self and a distinct and separate bad self, there would be no need for his good self to repent, certainly not in the same way, as for his bad self.¹ When in repentance a man begins to realize his sinfulness, he is not conscious of a good and a bad self. His sins are his. They do not arise out of a part of his self, but from his one and only self. And

¹ Double or triple personalities as they are called, are confessedly abnormal, and have an abnormal psychology. However baffling they may be to the moralist, the dual or triple personality is really one person. Otherwise, he would be without interest to the psychologist. Probably these strange "personalities" are extreme instances of a moral fact which is not altogether absent in normal experience and persons. Most of us are at times inconsistent with our prevailing self. We are all more or less victims of what the psychologists call "ambivalence."

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these sins have brought him to a state of moral impotence in which there is no "good self" left. No doubt when a man tries to excuse his sinfulness two selves are very convenient, for he can blame one and keep his pride in the innocent and good self. This is perhaps a modern form of the old Docetic morality. It breaks down, however, on the fact that he that is righteous is righteous, and he that is wicked is wicked, and also on the eternal truth that we cannot serve God and mammon.

Before stating the simple conclusions of our consideration of repentance, we may perhaps put the question, 'Is it necessary for all men to repent?' The question, so put, is really so vague that to answer it, simply and directly, and without being misunderstood, is impossible. We may mean by the question, Is it necessary to pass through an hour of profound contrition and moral anguish? Is it necessary that in the river of life's experience there is one deep pool or one gorge where the waters rush tumultuously? Is it necessary that in the hours of life there should be one hour which is, above all others, the hour of repentance? Should there be one single hour or several distinct hours?

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To these questions the answer is "No." There is always a danger or tendency of taking a particular repentance or a type of repentance and making that the universal form which every human repentance must take. And yet, where moral life is earnest and intense, it is difficult to think of it without moments which are not sufficiently particularized by the term "moral progress." They are too deep and too transforming to be so generally and ordinarily described. No one, however, can prescribe the manner of those moments. They may come "with the earthquake, wind and fire" ; or with "the still, small voice." They may be as the sudden burst of blackest night into noon-day (if that were possible), or as the dawn that gently steals out of night into the brightness of the day. Every heart knows its own hour.

In the New Testament there are certain passages which seem to confine the call of repentance to a particular class, namely, to sinners and those that are sick. "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." These words, it has been maintained, should be taken literally. There is nothing of satire or irony in them. Christ's call for

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repentance was only for the sinful class ; it had no meaning for others. But this position can scarcely be maintained in face of Our Lord's general attitude to men ; and, as a particular instance, there was a man who had kept all the commandments from his youth up, and whom Christ loved, and from whom a great change was demanded that he might pass into life.

There are righteous that need no repentance, but theirs is a righteousness that becomes a pride of self, a cold pity and contempt for others, that blind righteousness and moral stupidity which, if the gods fight not with it in vain, is their hardest task.

The repentance of the righteous is just as necessary as that of the sinful. It is certainly more morally difficult, but "with God all things are possible."

We may now summarize our conclusions :

- (i) Repentance is a fact of reality consonant with all true moral experience.
- (ii) Distinct in itself, it is caused by the appearance and acceptance of a new spirit that transforms the personality.
- (iii) It is an act or number of acts necessary for all men ; an experience by which men truly live.

III. Forgiveness

WHAT do we mean by the Forgiveness of Sin?

In attempting to answer this question, we may first consider certain popular conceptions which fasten upon the element of penalty, and make forgiveness consist in its remission.

In legal forgiveness—meaning by that the forgiveness of a criminal on the part of a judge—no doubt the forgiveness consists in the cancelling, in whole or in part, of the penalty. For a judge to forgive a criminal, and, at the same time, to make him pay the appointed penalty, would be a contradiction. But such forgiveness has little, if anything, in common with the divine forgiveness. A murderer may be forgiven of God, but he will, none the less, have to pay the penalty of his crime. In his case, forgiveness does not consist in the remission of all penalty.

But there are other penalties, such as the loss of social reputation, of health and of happiness, which fall upon sin. The way of transgressors is hard, sometimes. When forgiveness comes, does it make the way easier? does it restore health

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and happiness and the comfort of a good reputation? It may, but certainly not necessarily and always. R. L. Stevenson has painted in words a portrait of a friend of his youth. This friend was a man greatly gifted and marked out for high distinction in the world. But, on the high seas of life, somehow or other, he miserably went down. He returned bankrupt of money, health and honour to his old home and haunts. With heroic humility, however, of which few who knew his former pride would have thought him capable, he bore his punishment. He never indulged in self-pity. He was brave. He began to show a new gentleness and a new interest in others. Surely, in his humility, courage and gentleness—in his great repentance—he was forgiven! And yet, in spite of the forgiveness and the new spirit, he had to live out his days like some bird with broken wing. To the end he had to pay, in a broken body, the penalty for what he had been. "What we sow, we reap." If we sin, natural and social penalties may fall upon us, which we, even though we are greatly and divinely forgiven, may have to suffer till the end of time.

There is a theological dogma which is, in principle though not in substance, allied to the

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popular conception that forgiveness has much, if not everything to do with the remission of penalty—the dogma that forgiveness is the cancellation of death. According to this dogma, death is not taken in the physical sense, and could not be so taken, for forgiven men do die. Death is taken in some metaphysical or absolute sense. It is death as God knows it, that is cancelled. This may be death as annihilation, or as endless damnation, or as permanent separation from God, the true and real life. That cancellation—the cancellation of death as the wages of sin—is the substance of forgiveness.

This dogma contains some truth. Forgiveness—as we shall argue later—means reunion of the sinner with God, the true life. In that reunion the sinner feels himself triumphant over personal death. He has conquered death and the grave. But the dogma largely places the realization of forgiveness and its concrete substance in the future. What the sinner needs is forgiveness here and now. That triumph over physical death and death in every sense may be a true ground for present gratitude and a motive to a new life. It does not, however, meet the whole need of the sinner who requires not only to be saved from death and its fears, but also from his

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present sinning self. The dogma fails to satisfy completely the sinner's actual need.

Another popular conception of forgiveness is, that it allows the sinner to begin morally *de novo*. This conception does not necessarily lay the same stress on penalty as the previous conceptions. It deals with the record of sinfulness which, in forgiveness, is blotted out. The sins of the past are erased from the leaves of life, and a new and fair sheet is given to the sinner. But the record cannot be so easily wiped out as this conception frequently implies. The record still remains in the memory. Nor can moral experience be mechanically divided into separate sections. Further, if the record could be and were wiped out as the markings upon a slate, the process would probably lead to bad results. The cleaning of the slate would be no guarantee that it would be kept clean, or that, in the future, we should only write upon it what is good and true. An objection which Protestants frequently bring against the Doctrine of Penance, might easily be brought against this 'clean-slate theory.' It may make forgiveness too easy, and it gives no guarantee for the future.

All these conceptions and other varieties of them fail in this respect, they do not emphasize

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sufficiently the fact that forgiveness is a relation between persons. All forgiveness, Divine and human, is supremely a personal concern. We do not forgive wrongs and sins nor their penalties; we forgive the sinner and the wrong-doer. And this personalness, if the word may be allowed, is in no wise lessened in the case of the Divine Forgiver and the human sinner. In the Divine forgiveness there is a change of the personal relationship between God and the wrong-doer. That change has personal meaning both for God and the sinner. And accordingly, to understand the meaning of the Divine forgiveness, we have to try and learn how, on the one hand, God is affected by this personal change, and how, on the other hand, the sinner is affected.

An objection may be raised to the suggestion of a personal change in God or of God being affected by such a change. "God is everlastingly the same. He is Love, and nothing but Love to His children. It is we, not He nor His Love, that need to change." True; but Love is no single changeless thing. Love is not static; it is dynamic. It is infinite in its forms, methods and operations. Love may sorrow and be angry; it may rejoice and praise. It may utter its voice or withhold it. It may accompany

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us with delight, or, in grief, allow us to go our own way. 'Twere a dead love that never changed its voice, or whose heart had an unvarying beat. Love has its different voices and its changing beats; but, in all its differences and changes, it remains eternally Love. God may and does change; but, in all His changes, He is the same God.

What, then, is the change in God when He forgives? He draws nigh to the sinner, He unites Himself or re-unites Himself to the sinner's life. He becomes actually and actively the sinner's friend. He draws near to the sinner in righteousness and love and with righteousness and love. He enters or re-enters into personal communion with the sinner. He ends the personal separation. He identifies Himself with His erring child.

This does not mean that God, at one moment, withheld His grace, and then, at the next, decided to be gracious and forgiving. God is, at all times, willing to forgive. At all times He is loving the sinner. He may be wrathful, in part because He cannot (for the time) change, because He is not allowed, in some particular case, to change and throw aside His wrath and turn His Loving Will into other forms. But in forgiveness,

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He has the joy of changing, of ending the necessary condemnation, the opposition and the separation. God who was separate from His own child is now united with him again in love and righteousness. God is reconciled to His aforetime foe. God has forgiven. His sorrow is turned into joy.

But the sinner has also to change in the act of forgiveness. He is changed in his opposition to, and separation from, God. He has broken a personal tie with that which is not-God, and become personally united in love and righteousness to that which is God. He has received the very life of God. He has made the righteousness that condemns sinning, and the Love that redeems from sinning, his own. He receives a new righteousness and a new love, and so personally, that he that was unrighteous, in the soul of his being becomes righteous, and he that was loveless, loving. The sinner is personally changed. He is born again. He has repented. He is converted. He is forgiven. And the whole process and result are due to the Spirit of God. It was God's Spirit that moved him to repentance and made repentance possible. One living Spirit has been active all through; in God, forgiving; in the sinner, repenting.

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This interpretation of forgiveness no doubt makes one great assumption, the assumption, namely, of the free Personality of God. But the assumption is a necessary one. Forgiveness of any kind is an experience between persons. It is, we repeat, only persons who forgive and are forgiven. Forgiveness implies both righteousness and love, and these are attributes of persons alone which they exercise through their freedom. If God forgives, He must be a Person, or, at least, personal with the attributes of righteousness, love and freedom.

This fact explains, in the experience of forgiveness, an element which seems paradoxical. The forgiven ascribes his forgiveness to God. He also ascribes his repentance, without which the forgiveness could not be actualized, to God. The whole process is due to God alone. This is the universal conviction of the forgiven life. Through this conviction the forgiven may be led to adopt some theory of Predestination or Election. He himself is nothing in the process of forgiveness. God is and does everything. But, whether or no he feels compelled to accept a doctrine which implies the Absoluteness of God, whether or no the Absoluteness of God remains simply a religious feeling or is further explicated

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into a dogma, this fact emerges—and this is the paradox—that the forgiven man has really broken for ever with every mechanical, deterministic or fatalistic interpretation of man and the world, and with all possibility of ever believing that kind of interpretation. That “Great Other,” that Spirit that is the source and cause of the forgiven man’s experience, cannot be a vast Mechanism, sheer Will, or an Idea, or a Principle, or the Sum of things, which do not and cannot forgive. To forgive, God cannot be any of these things. He must be a living Person. The forgiven has had in the depths of his soul an experience of Personality, and that on a Divine and Infinite scale. The forgiven man has personally reacted to the Personality of God. Henceforth he can be no fatalist, materialist, or mechanist, or pantheist : henceforth he really lives in a world of free personality. The experience of forgiveness breaks down every mechanical, materialist, mechanistic, pantheistic theory with a sledge-hammer blow, leaving to philosophy and theology the task of clearing up the débris.

It may help to bring out something of the rich meaning of forgiveness if we consider certain feelings which are sometimes connected—as we

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believe wrongly—with the experience. There is the feeling, for instance, expressed in the words, "God may forgive us, but we can never forgive ourselves." If these words mean, when we use them, that we ought not and cannot ever make light of past sins, treating them with laughter as peccadilloes of a folly that is gone, then the words express a right feeling. But if the words mean that we ought, in spite of God's forgiveness, or perhaps because of it, to cherish a feeling of self-resentment and self-centred bitterness, then they fail to do justice to God's grace in forgiveness. In a very real sense we do and ought to forgive our sinning and our sinful selves. The life that God gives to us in forgiveness is forgiving and redeeming life, which becomes identical with our life, becomes, indeed, our true and real life. And, if we are true to our God-given life, we must forgive our sinful selves and the sinning of others. If we say that we cannot forgive ourselves, and our words are honest, and not simply the words of self-pity and self-righteousness, then we have not identified ourselves fully with God's Forgiveness, Righteousness and Love. In such case, we have failed to understand God's Forgiveness; we are not united to God; we are not forgiven. Truly

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Again, there is another feeling connected with forgiveness, expressed in the distinction which we sometimes make between forgiving and forgetting. "I can forgive, but I can never forget," we say. Now we may, it is true, in our personal dealings with one another, establish a relation which those words, more or less accurately, describe. But whether the relation is one which we should honour with the name of forgiveness, is doubtful. It would be a very mean forgiveness, even on the human scale. We must not, however, take our human forgiving, always more or less imperfect, as the complete standard of God's forgiveness. God *does* forget our iniquities. He remembers them no more against us. Justification is the Pauline and theological term for this Divine forgetting. In the story of the Prodigal, the father simply cannot understand the mean spirit of the elder brother who rakes up the past. The father lives with joy in the living present. "This my son was dead"; true enough, but the really great fact is "he is alive again." With that great fact, with the joy of it and the hope in it, the mind of the father is filled. He had looked forward

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to the hour when he could say, "Put the ring on his finger" and "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him," and by those real symbols forget, and know that he has forgotten, the dead and sinful past.

And we also can forget our sins; we ought to forget them; and we need to forget them. Not one of us can afford a moment of our lives in the erection of depressing and ugly memorials to unworthy, dead things. And we can forget our sins. Forgetting is just as necessary a part of human experience as remembering. Many people complain about the ineffectiveness of their memories, which are probably quite good enough; what is wrong is the ineffectiveness of their forgetting. We live as much by forgetting as by remembering. Every time we project our personal activity along a particular line, we lose sight and remembrance of a hundred other lines. And, if the particular line of activity is worthy, the more forgetting we do the better. And in the forgiven life, a new line of personal activity has been given, making such demands upon the total personality and giving such opportunities, that it is not so much a new line as a new life that has been presented. In forgiveness, we travel through a new and beautiful

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country where peace and hope abound, and we forget "the black country" with its depressing, bedraggled gloom through which we have passed. True, we can call up, out of our memory, our past self; we may be reminded of it, time and again. But it is sheer, self-righteous morbidity that loves to dwell upon it. The truest condemnation of our sinful self is to cast it behind us into the sea, and to sail our barque free of bilge that is not even good as ballast.

No small part of the forgiven life is to forget the past. We ought to forget our sins with a Divine forgetting; forget them as God forgets them, which, by God's grace, we can.

And as we can and ought to forget our own sinning, we can and ought to forget, in every true act of human forgiveness, the sinning of others. If God can and does forget our neighbour's sin, surely we can and ought.

At the expense of a brief digression we may here refer to two aspects of forgiveness,—to its universality and to its human obligation.

In what sense can we say that forgiveness is a universal experience? Certainly not in the sense that all men have an experience of Divine forgiveness. To many what we have written on

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forgiveness will have no meaning at all; and that, not because of the imperfectness of the writing in form or substance. Whatever the form or substance, the same would have been true. Nor must we condemn as fools and blind of heart those who know and reck nothing of forgiveness. It may be they are more forgiven than they know.

And we are not thinking of people who live in non-Christian lands. In our own Christian country there are some who have no personal experience of God's forgiving love. They may or may not pay lip-service to the fact of forgiveness; they may pray in public and in private for the forgiveness of sins, or they may never speak or think about it at all, but the fact still remains, they really know little or nothing about the forgiveness of sins. They could give you no account whatever based on the experience of life. And yet, in spite of their inability and lack of real knowledge, they must—without knowing it—have acted, time and again, on the basis of the reality of forgiveness. They have, at times, repented, they have denied the evil, they have chosen the good, they have morally progressed, and that could not be unless forgiveness were a reality, for forgiveness is a necessary

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condition of all repenting, moral choice and progress. Without forgiveness these things could not be, which amounts to saying that without forgiveness there could be no moral life at all. Forgiveness is universal, and in the same sense, as morality. Morality is not universal in the sense that all men are moral, but in the sense that it is necessary, if there is to be any moral and personal life at all. We do not all, and always, feel the universal necessities of life. We all, for physical existence, need food, but there are some people so fortunately placed that they never feel acutely the need of it, and yet they cannot live without it. And forgiveness is a universal necessity for moral life, though many may never feel the need of it. It may be because they are easily content with meagre fare in moral things (though not in physical) or it may be because they have never known the desolation of sin, and felt a hunger and thirst for righteousness.

If we put the question of universality in another form and ask, Can any sinful man be forgiven and know something of its meaning?—the answer is "Yes." There is forgiveness for all. He that seeketh can find, and will find, if he be earnest in his seeking. Forgiveness is an

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experience that breaks no law of our personal life; indeed, it follows the laws of our personal life and of all our moral being. If we are persons at all, with the possibilities of righteousness and love, we can be forgiven. If verily we can *become* persons, we can be forgiven. And if we cry out for forgiveness, if we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we are still persons, not perfect and complete maybe, perhaps mean and impoverished, but persons, none the less, who can repent and who can be forgiven.

The human obligation of forgiveness has been incidentally referred to, and the digression on this aspect is only made here to emphasize the vital relation between the grace of God's forgiveness and the duty of man's forgiveness to his fellows. In the New Testament the two are closely related. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." When a man is forgiven he receives loving, forgiving, redeeming life. That life becomes his own. He cannot then be anything but forgiving, and forgiving in God's way. If a man is unwilling to forgive, even though the offence against him be great, he cannot have received

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the forgiveness of God. And if we are unwilling to forgive, we cannot expect God to forgive us; for the simple fact is we do not want forgiveness, perhaps because its obligation is too severe.

We may now turn to the question of the effect of forgiveness upon the consequences of sin.

We have seen that the inevitable consequence of sin is, that it tends to dehumanize and de-personalize the sinner. Sin ruptures the bond with our higher and true self and with God. In forgiveness, that rupture is healed. The sinner is again in contact with the source of true personal life. He has come to himself and to his true home. He was dead or dying, now he is alive again. The tragic consequence has been stopped in its course.

There are, however, other consequences; there is the knowledge of wasted opportunity and of apparently irreparable moral injury to oneself and to others; there are the fines that nature and society exact. A bitter harvest may still await the reaping. Is the sinner, though forgiven, compelled to reap as he has sown? It would be futile to pretend that forgiveness always brings health and happiness, prosperity of every kind. The way of the forgiven may be hard.

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"As we sow, we reap." We sow darnel; we reap darnel. We sow wheat; we reap wheat. But the forgiven man begins at once to sow wheat. And, if he has to reap darnel that has seeded in his nature, he will not reap alone, nor with the old sickle. The labour may be hard for many a day, but new power and new methods are now his. The burden and the fight may be unto blood, but he will neither bear nor fight in his old strength. God has come into his life, and God in him and with him will do the reaping, the bearing and the fighting. These may not be easy things even for God. Real forgiving means taking the consequences of forgiving, and these are never light. But God will not shirk the conflict; with impotent joy and strength He will fight it to triumphant issue. A hard battle it may be, but, strangely, with peace in it as well as joy—the peace that always comes from fighting Right's dear cause, and the peace of certain victory.

But this particular problem of the consequences has another and, perhaps, more hopeful aspect. The particular consequences which we have been considering arise, for the most part, out of the natural and social environment of the sinner. But Personality creates its own environment,

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or rather gives meaning to its environment. The sinner creates for himself an environment of loss and suffering; he makes his way hard. But the sinner is changed, he becomes a new personality that will make its own environment. This new personality may have to build with rough, unhewn stones and in a land that is waste and desolate, but build it will, with the power that can build the old waste places and restore the former desolations, and that can make all things work together for good to them that love God.

To the forgiven personality it is really true, the old things pass away. They become the opportunity for new tasks and new duties, for new conflicts and victories of the soul. And in time, even on the old waste places, there may rise a temple of living beauty. The new personality may have to pay off a heavy mortgage left by the old, but it now has means to pay off the burden and to rebuild in beauty, strength and honour.

Finally, does forgiveness mean that the sinner ceases to be a sinner and no longer sins? Certain words in the New Testament might lead us to think this. "He that is born of God sinneth not, neither indeed can sin." Now these and

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similar words in the New Testament are not to be taken as simple dogma: they are the expression of experience. There are moments in the life of the soul when it is so possessed by God's love and goodness, when the will is so perfectly submitted to the Divine Will, that any departure from that loving, good and perfect Will is simply unthinkable. These are great moments, and it is to such moments the words refer. They do not, however, cover the whole of life. There are other moments when we say "if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us," and we are glad of the promise that "if we confess our sins, God is holy and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Neither kind of moment is absolute, nor should the words that express one or the other be made absolute and dogmatic.

On some mount of Transfiguration, the vision of omnipotent Love and Righteousness dominates us, and we cannot sin; but we come down from the mount, and the radiance and power of the vision seem blurred or completely lost, and, though we have seen the vision and may still faintly see it, we sin. But not as before do we sin. Sin may live in the redeemed, but the

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redeemed cannot live in sin. In his personality it may still live, but not now as lord and master, but rather as an unwelcome guest or unruly subject, that, by every artifice and power, has to be driven out of house and kingdom, driven out, time and again, and, finally, for ever.

Redemption or forgiveness is really a process that goes on its triumphant way from grace to grace, held back by many an obstacle, but never really defeated nor robbed of its triumph and present joy, for it is God in us and with us. It is His omnipotent Righteousness and Love with us and in us, creating that mightiest courage that dares the long and hard fight, and, in spite of many a repulse, is sure of the last battle and of final and complete victory.

Sin, repentance and forgiveness are not, simply, three things; they are the words by which we express aspects and moments in the soul's experience. They mark the place where two spirits meet—the Spirit of God and the spirit of man. They describe the meeting of man and God and their journey together. At that meeting there begins for man a pilgrim-way, when he learns from the Spirit of God what it is to sin, repent and be forgiven. He can only enter

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the way at the portal where God stands. He can only walk in it as God's pilgrim.

To cross the portal into the way is like passing from darkness into light, from bondage into freedom, from death to life. The way is so wonderful that even the pilgrim may ask, "Is it real?" Is redemption with its triumph, its joy and peace, a reality? If it is not, the New Testament has arisen out of a delusion, a glorious delusion maybe, but a delusion none the less; the saints and penitents have been deluded; all the men and women who have believed in it and through their belief have been enabled to live days of goodness and peace—they are all deluded.

If it is a delusion, then there seems no true hope for many of the sons of men; no hope for those who, sick of self and sin, hunger and thirst after righteousness; no hope for those who long to burst the bonds of the flesh and to live in the freedom of the spirit, no hope for those whose deepest desire is to be real themselves and to live in a real world; no hope, for it seems beyond the power of knowledge or culture or art or science or philosophy to convince man that he is not a sinner, to relieve him of the burdens his sense of sin creates, and to meet that deepest craving

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of the soul, to die to what it is and to live again in goodness and beauty. Life without forgiveness is but one sad despair.

There is a shallow optimism which tells us that we think too much of our sins and our need of forgiveness, and which professes to explain our sins, and their great need, away. And, at times, the natural man will gladly accept this optimism; and even the burdened spirit will turn to it for healing and balm. But there is a sense of reality in the natural man, and much more in the burdened spirit, that will not suffer him to be satisfied with this easy optimism and its soothing balm. We *know* we can only take this optimism at the great price of the degradation of our inner life and of our whole being's delusion. It is no balm, but poison to the soul.

In spite, then, of all the moral trifling of the natural man and all the narrow theories and sophistries that deny the Great Experience and the Reality of the great way, the Pilgrims enter the way, walk in it, and find it the Way of Reality and of Life.

IV. The Place of Jesus in the Act and Process of Redemption

WHAT we have written so far, of Redemption and Sin, of Repentance and Forgiveness, has been written without expressly giving to Jesus any part or place in the process. And yet, it can be emphatically said here, that what has been written—the experience we have attempted to describe—could never have been apart from Jesus Christ and apart from His teaching, life and work. It has not been simply moral or even spiritual experience which we have been attempting to set forth, but specifically Christian experience which, without Christ, is impossible. Christ is confessed by all Christians as the Author of Christianity, which is not chiefly a system of beliefs or a moral code, but life that has been brought into personal and living communion with God Himself.

What, then, has been and is the part played by Christ in the redemptive process? This is the question of “The Work of Christ.” He is, confessedly, the Redeemer and the Saviour;

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how did He and does He bring about man's redemption? The attempts to answer this question have led to theories of atonement which we may, very briefly, classify in the following way :

(i) Theories of Substitution. According to these theories, Christ is the substitute for the sinner, and, especially, for his guilt and the penalty that his guilt deserves. Christ takes the place of the sinner and bears the penalty of his sin. But, apart altogether from the justice involved in such a method, and that it does not square with certain facts of experience, the method does not redeem the sinner, for it is not from penalty, of whatever kind, that the sinner chiefly requires to be freed; he requires to be saved from his sin, or rather, from his sinful and sinning self. Again, a sinner earnestly seeking personal salvation does not crave a substitute, even though the substitute be the Son of God. He craves a redeemed and saved personality that is really his own.

Whatever may be the causes which have given rise to substitutional theories, and in spite of the great names with which they are connected, they fail to interpret the Christian experience of redemption. The modern mind has largely discarded

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these theories. To make belief in them an essential part of Christian redemption, is to make Christian redemption itself morally distasteful; it is to injure the Redeemer by under-rating His work, and, in the last resort, to do despite to the character of God.

(ii) Theories of Representation. In these theories, Christ redeems man by representing him before God. Christ is perfectly what man ought to be. He satisfies perfectly the demand which God makes upon men. In some ideal way, Christ and man are one. Whatever Christ is, man ideally is; whatever He does, man ideally does. Man, then, is ideally redeemed, and makes his redemption actual by accepting the satisfaction which Christ, in His Person and Work, has made to God.

This class of theory is not without difficulty. God does not desire a representative of the sinner; He desires the sinner himself. Nor does the sinner, in his need, demand a "represented" redemption, nor does he desire to give to God a "represented" satisfaction. The sinner desires, himself, to be redeemed and, himself, to please God. No other can represent a man before God. In that high relation, each and every man must stand by himself.

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The most popular form of representational theory in the present day is that which is known as the Penitential Theory of Atonement. This theory starts with the fact that repentance is the one sole condition of redemption. But the repentance must be adequate, indeed perfect. Sinful man is incapable of such a repentance. At best, he can only make a sinful repentance. Were he able, of himself, to make a perfect repentance, nothing further would be required. God would be satisfied, and man would be redeemed. But as man cannot, of himself, adequately repent and satisfy God, Christ makes the perfect satisfaction of repentance. And, as Christ is not a man but universal man or "inclusive humanity," the repentance and satisfaction which He makes are made by every man. All men are in Christ, and, in Christ, perfectly repent and satisfy God.

Apart from the questionable philosophy upon which it is usually based, this theory seriously confuses repentance with moral sympathy. One man may so sympathize with another in his sin as to share the burden of condemning it, of feeling its shame and of combating it—he may be so one in all this with the sinner that he may be said—but only rhetorically—to make the sin

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his own. But this is not repentance. When a man repents, it is of his own sinning and from his own self that he repents. No talk about "the unity of humanity" or "an inclusive humanity," can destroy the fact of the ownness of the sinner's sin. Our sinning and our repenting—these are our own, even though the latter cannot be apart from the forgiving Spirit of God. Christ may be said—but only with a loose rhetoric—to repent in us, for it is His Spirit in us that turns us from our sinning to righteousness, but His repentance is different from ours. We repent of our sins. He does not repent of His own, but of ours. The two repentances are not the same, and for Christ's repentance the truer and better term is the ordinary one of forgiveness.

(iii) Theories of Moral Influence. According to these, it is the influence of Christ's character as shown in His work and preaching, in His life and in His death, that induces repentance in the sinner and secures his redemption. The usual criticism of Moral Influence Theories is, that they make Christ a moral example, and the sinner needs more than a moral example to save him from his sinfulness. In face of the moral weakness of the sinner, a moral example becomes

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a mockery. The situation demands something more powerful than example, even than the example of Christ.

Such criticism no doubt has truth in it, for it speaks out of actual experience. And the exponents of moral influence theories will have to say what they mean by Moral Influence, and probably have to make the term mean more than it ordinarily does. The well is deep, and "moral influence" seems too short a rope.

It is commonplace to say that all theories of atonement contain some truth. They all accept and declare the truths of the love of God, of man's sin and need of redemption. The great fundamental facts are sure enough, but man sometimes builds on strong foundations very fantastic and even flimsy structures.

Again, it is sometimes said that all the theories are true. If that means that they are complementary and only need to be united to gain the complete truth, the statement that all the theories are true—is false. The great theories of atonement are as much antithetical as complementary, and much that is regarded as essential to each theory would have to be eliminated before any reconciliation or synthesis could be effected.

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The radical fault with most, if not all, theories of atonement, is that they try to interpret redemption and Christ's place in it, from some particular conception, like the righteousness, or the honour, or the holiness, or the love of God—and not one of these conceptions is used without some taint or circumscription from its environment—instead of beginning with the experience itself and interpreting it. They have not been all faithful to Macleod Campbell's principle of interpreting the nature of atonement in its own light.

However, whatever may be the strength or weakness of the various theories of atonement, the fact seems to be that men to-day are not interested in them. They turn from them in impatience and in bewilderment. At the best, the greatest of them are regarded as monuments of speculative genius, the writing upon which is confusing and difficult to decipher. And the attempt to write anything upon the experience of redemption and the work of the Redeemer seems to many, if not an impertinence, at least a useless endeavour. But the present purpose is not to add another theory, nor even to try and improve on an old one, but rather to state, as simply as possible, what is involved in the

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experience of redemption and to give to Christ His rightful place.

The New Testament is the Book of Redemption. It has, in its varied literature, arisen out of the Redeemed Life. In its pages, the Redeemed Life in its righteousness and love, in its peace with God, in all its moral newness, spiritual splendour and joy has been inevitably revealed. How did that Life come into being? Confessedly, it was the creation of Jesus Christ. All the writers of the New Testament, and they do not only speak for themselves, but for the communal Christian consciousness of their day, are convinced of that fact. "There is none other salvation under Heaven save in Jesus Christ." He and He alone is the Redeemer, and the Creator of the New Life. That is the constant conviction and constant witness, implicitly or explicitly, in every thought and feeling of the New Testament. As we read the New Testament to-day, we cannot but feel the existence of a vital, organic relation between Jesus and His first redeemed disciples.

Christ was the source and inspiration of the New Life, which was re-incarnated, communicated, given and received in the lives of the Redeemed.

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From His side there was personal action of the highest order, from their side personal reaction, and the result was a personal union, in which individual personality was not lost, but rather emerged in new strength and richness. There may be a Pauline Theology and a Johannine Theology, a Theology of the Synoptics and of the minor Epistles; but neither the creation of these theologies nor acceptance of them made the redeemed Life. That was due to Christ Himself.

Christ saved His Redeemed from their lower selves and from a world of decaying things. He gave to them a Kingdom of Love, joy and peace, redeemed them unto God. The divine honour which the first disciples ascribe to His Person was but the acknowledgment of His mighty transforming work in their lives. The prerogatives which the writers of the New Testament give to Jesus in ascending value, till they place Him at the very right hand of God from eternity to eternity, were not the result of a studied estimate of His Person, but were the spontaneous and inevitable expression of an experience of a redemption which only Divine Power and Love could create. New Life and Divine Personality had been created. That could only be by a Divine Creator and Divine Personality.

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Jesus redeemed His first disciples by the power of His Personality.

But to say that does not solve the problem. It only brings us to its threshold. The situation, indeed, presented by the New Testament may be, as a problem, insolvable. But while, as a problem, the creation of the redeemed life may be insolvable—as an experience it may lend itself to such explanation or description as will make it consistent with the facts of life and ascertained knowledge.

How did the Personality of Jesus act upon the first disciples—the men of the New Testament—so as to create new and redeemed life? Is there an answer to that “How”?

We are here face to face with one of the problems of personality. Can one personality so affect another that there is a great resultant change, in a word, a redeemed life, a personality so different from what previously existed as to be morally and spiritually, a new personality? If so, what principles are involved in the process?

The simplest way, perhaps, to elucidate this problem is to take one or two common instances of personal action and reaction and try to discover what is implicit or involved in the process. And first let us take the instance of a teacher and his

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pupil. The teacher communicates knowledge to his pupil. But knowledge implies an object known and a subject knowing; it implies a relationship between them; break the relationship or remove one of the elements and the knowledge—the particular knowledge in question—ceases to be. And so, when a teacher communicates knowledge to his pupil, he communicates an object and a subject and the particular relation between them. And he himself is the subject, and the object is related to himself, is indeed part of himself—though it may also belong to a higher unity, to that mind in general to which all minds knowing the particular object concerned, belong—so that what the teacher communicates to his pupil is himself, his own mind, his own thinking self, his own activity in some particular act of knowledge.

Communication between mind and mind is not simply a transference of so-called objective facts—facts of knowledge are never solely objective—it is much more communication of the self, limited, it may be, for the time to a particular relation, but, none the less, of the self and of the total self, for knowledge is just the total self thinking of some particular object, the total self in some particular relation.

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We acknowledge the fact of personal communication in the case of a teacher and a pupil when we say, that "the pupil is acquiring the mind of the master." We usually say this where the teacher is communicating his intellectual principles and his manner of regarding truth, where, if we may say so, he is communicating his intellectual personality to his pupil. But even where the teacher is not personally impressive, where he seems to be communicating mere dry facts, it is none the less true, he is communicating his mind, his self, even though it is a "dry" mind or "dry" self. There is always, in the process, communication of mind or personality.

We may take another personal relation, that of a parent and child. The parent trains the child by the communication of personal ideals. Now, in personal ideals there are two necessary elements; there is what we call the ideal in itself, but the ideal is related to a subject, in this instance the parent, and it is his ideal, part of his personal self, and when he communicates his ideal to his child, he communicates himself or his personality in its relation to the particular ideals. This is true, if it is only precepts that he is trying to inculcate; the parent inculcates the precept as

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held by himself. Where the parent only believes in the precepts as good or advantageous for the child, without himself practising them, it is still himself, a form of his personality, that he is communicating: where he believes and also practises them, it is again his personality, but a personality that is truer and naturally more impressive to the child. "Communication" may not be the right word, but it is, at least, sufficient to express the fact that one personality can give itself—in the instances cited through the particulars of knowledge and conduct—and that in these particulars the two personalities can become one. The process goes on unceasingly in our personal relations; and, no doubt, it rests upon some fundamental, ideal, comprehensive unity of personality in which all individual personalities may become one and identical.

In this personal communication the two personalities are not absorbed, the one in the other. The teacher and the parent remain each themselves; the pupil and the child remain themselves. Indeed, we may say that they have become more their true, distinctive selves through the personal communication. After the communication, they live in a higher unity, in a richer personal context, and in that higher unity they attain to a

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richer personality, and, in the richer context, are not merely similar but identical. They have become, in so far as the particular knowledge or ideal is concerned, consubstantial.

Now this may or may not explain for us the ultimate relation between personalities and the ultimate "why" of personal communication, but it does seem to establish the fact of real, personal communication between one self and another. And accordingly, when we say that Jesus communicated His Personality to His disciples, or that He lived in them and they in Him, we are not asserting a piece of vague mysticism or a phenomenon of a unique order, but a form of experience analogous to every kind of personal relationship. Indeed, we may set down as a mark of personality that it can and does communicate itself to other personalities, and personality would not be personality if it could not and did not. The *Unio Mystica* between Christ and the believer is no more mystical, certainly no more mysterious, than the personal communication of knowledge and truth.

We may regard the problem from another point of view. In the New Testament we have revealed to us in the believers a particular kind or quality of personality. We have persons

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who know God as a holy and loving Father, who know the meaning of divine Sonship, and who, with the redeeming love of God in their hearts, seek to redeem their fellow men to a like beatitude. A new quality of personality is revealed in the New Testament, distinct from the Greek or Roman or Jewish form of personality. Whence came this new personality? We may say it came through moral and spiritual progress, and that we have presented to us in the New Testament one of those periods when man rises in the scale of human goodness and worth. But that is only begging the question. Whence came the progress, this rise in the human scale? Human progress is not its own cause, and even if, at times, we describe it in terms of general evolution, we have not explained the cause of the evolution. Human progress or a rise in the scale of human worth, that is, the appearance of new personality, can only come, we may take it, by receiving higher personality. If we take a society of persons that has risen in the scale of personality, that rise can only be through a personality or personalities in that community transcending the personal life that has been, and communicating new, transcendent life. There may be a general progress in society, but society

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does not generally progress. It progresses individually, through one person (or more) to whom has been personally communicated higher truth and a nobler ideal, to whom has been communicated richer and nobler personality, and who personally communicates that richer and nobler personality to others, by starting and maintaining the personal action and reaction which bring moral progress and a rise in the human scale.

But the question is not one of argument alone, but of history and of fact. The men of the New Testament knew themselves as redeemed. They had received a kingdom. And, whatever varieties of thought and expression there may be in the New Testament, there is not a word of doubt among the first believers that it was to Jesus they owed their spiritual life and kingdom. They called Jesus their Lord and Saviour, the Son of God by whom they had become sons. That was their witness for which they were willing, if need be, to die.

But objection may be taken to the statement that the personality of Jesus redeemed His first disciples, on the ground that the statement is too formal. We must give to the personality a moral and spiritual content, before the statement can have much fullness of meaning. We must

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so describe the personality as to make it seem potent for so great a task as redemption. And here we are met by sceptical arguments. What do we know of Jesus? Historical criticism has given up the attempt to present a portrait in which all the lines of His character would be exhibited. And it is true that the Jesus which the critics give us, does not always seem mighty to save. But we do not see and know the personality of Jesus in the constructions of historical criticism, not even in those first constructions, the Synoptic Gospels, certainly not in those alone. We see Him in the total life that is presented in the New Testament. That life is the witness of His personality and of the kind of personality His was. And, after we have yielded to the demands of criticism, there arises out of the pages of the New Testament a Son of God who, in the obedience of Sonship, sought to save the sinful by the giving of Himself even unto death, who rejoiced over one repentant sinner more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance, and whose Passion was to redeem men who had lost themselves and their way, to give back what they had lost, and to make them sons of God. The personality of Jesus is the personality of redeeming, holy Love.

V. The Crucified Redeemer

ACCORDING to Tertullian, "the whole of the Christian name, both substance and fruit, is the death of Christ." And, even if the Cross has not always been regarded as containing the whole Gospel, it has always been held as the supreme fact and factor in achieving redemption, and as the piercing point of the Gospel. In the New Testament the Cross of Jesus is the great reality. Whatever varying lines of interpretation the New Testament may offer, the Cross itself remains an absolute reality and always of supremest value.

To this reality, as it is presented in the New Testament, and as it has affected the experience of multitudes of Christians, theology has devoted its attention and evolved theories of atonement which, if they have not made the Cross a stumbling block and foolishness, have surrounded it with an intellectual and moral obscurity, from which it is the task of present-day theology to rescue it, so that the Cross may become, and be truly, the Word of Redemption.

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These theories of atonement, with their differing and discordant notes, have had an effect the reverse of which their authors desired. They frequently bewilder the mind; they do not save the soul. They have doubtless served a purpose as earthen vessels in which living truth might be, for a season, preserved. But it is not an overstatement to say that the Word of the Cross has retained its meaning and power, not because of these theories but in spite of them. And it is no small testimony to the vitality of the Cross that it still lives with its challenge to man's thought and its power over his soul.

The hesitation which, inevitably, arises in writing of the death of Jesus does not rise simply from the sacredness of the subject, but also out of the fear that one may darken counsel yet the more. May God's grace save from that ! We can only pray that, approaching the Cross, in truthfulness and in humility of heart, we may not make it of less effect.

Why did Jesus die on the Cross ? He died on the Cross because of the fierce opposition which His life and ministry raised almost from their beginning. That opposition drove Him out of Galilee to make His fateful venture in

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Jerusalem. It began with the leaders and, finally, laid hold of the people. Inspired by political and social motives, it gathered into a hatred which could only be satisfied by the death of its victim.

But why did this opposition and hate arise? They arose because Jesus steadfastly pursued His one purpose of seeking to save that which was lost—His one purpose of redeeming the sinner from misery and sin to righteousness, joy and life with God. In carrying out this purpose, He broke the holy Sabbath; He criticised the Sacred Law; He condemned the lawyers—"the clergy" of His day; for a time, at least, He won a popularity with the people which only incensed the more those that sat in Moses' seat; at the last, He was treacherously betrayed, and the mob, in blindness of heart, turned against Him. All these things were the result of His fearless, persistent love of the sinful. In a word, His love awoke opposition which eventually crucified Him.

Jesus died upon the Cross because He loved the sinner. Of this love certain things may here be said.

First. This love was directed towards the individual sinner. Jesus did not pour out His

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soul unto death for the sake of the Kingdom. The Kingdom was God's, and, in God's good time, the Kingdom would come. He left the Kingdom in the hands of God, and set Himself to save the sinner, so that whenever and however it came, the sinner would enter into it. The Kingdom, no doubt, gave urgency to our Lord's appeal—"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." But we do not need to go beyond the parables of the 15th chapter of Luke to know that we are on sure ground when we say that Jesus loved and died for the individual sinner. In those parables there is *one* lost coin, *one* lost sheep, *one* lost son. But can love, in its nobler forms at least, be anything else than love for individual persons?

Secondly—This Love of Jesus was severely moral and spiritual in its purpose. It had no easy pity for the sinner and no indulgent judgment of his sin. It sought to lead the sinner through the strait gate of repentance, to regenerate him through the throes of a new birth. It sought to make the sinner a son of God. But the love was more than severely moral or divinely spiritual. There was a paradox in this love. It was love for the loveless. It was love, in itself holy and good and righteous,

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for the unholy, the evil and the wicked. It was love for love's enemies. It was holiness pouring out its soul of purity for the impure. Never was love and holiness like this. It was love that transcends all the love of poetry and romance. It was holiness that is no angelic innocence, but one that sits with sinners, knowing what they are, and leaves them, not with its garments beflecked, but shining with an even yet more radiant splendour of holiness.

And thirdly—this love individual, moral and paradoxical, with the inevitable pain of its own paradox, with its travail of seeking the lost, with its heart-break of disappointment, was God's own love. So Jesus Himself conceived it. The words "I and the Father are one" are from the Fourth Gospel, and may not be the actual words of Jesus, but they do make explicit what Jesus thought and felt about Himself. To Jesus His love and will to redeem were not like God's, but were God's identical will and love; yet, on that account, not less but more really His own. All the quality of God's love was in the love of Jesus, even to the point of that paradox where emerges the Omnipotence of Grace.

This love, at once God's and His own, brought to Jesus death upon the Cross.

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How has the Cross—the death of Jesus—the power to redeem? We might be content with the fact—the Cross does redeem—and raise no further question. And the only justification for putting the question is that, by putting the question and attempting an answer, the fact may be confirmed.

The death of Jesus is not a simple event, nor an episode ; it is not a thing at all. The death was the death of Jesus. It was a personal experience. JESUS died. His death was really an expression of His love and life. And love and life that are unto death and that have in them the Paradox of Omnipotence, cannot be really and completely expressed in terms of death at all. Such love lives ; such life is triumphant. They are the divinest expression of personality. They are personality itself at its highest and best. The Cross is not death ; it is Life. It is not a dead body ; it is the Living Person.

But personality can communicate itself and its life to other personality. The dying of Jesus, what it personally means of love and life—can be communicated to others. Paul said that he was crucified with Christ, that he was conformable to His death, that he had died in Christ, that he had been baptized into His death. These

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are not the words of dogma but of personal experience ; they are the words not of death but of communicated life. To die is to live. To be crucified with Christ is to be united to personality at its highest ; it is, at last, to find the goal of all our seeking and striving ; it is to learn the secret of life, it is to be saved.

Until we reach that goal or learn that secret, we shall be as strange guests in a dark and strange world. 'To die is to live'—we know ! But where shall we find this death unto life ? Not the formula, but the reality ; not a far-off goal, but a present power ? Where ? On Golgotha.

Was the death of Jesus necessary ? If His own had received Him, He would not have been crucified. But He might have had still to die for His mission of redemption. The Romans might have put Him to death ! But if the Romans had received Him ? What then ? Such conjecture is all futile. We cannot construct imaginary history. No one knows what would have been the career and fate of Jesus in a society utterly different from His own. All we can say is that, in any society, Jesus would have been true to Himself, and would have borne all the consequences of His fidelity. In the actual

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society in which He lived, and surrounded by the personal forces He was, His death on the Cross was inevitable.

"Then," it may be said, "there is only a contingent or empiric necessity attaching to His death." There certainly was such a necessity. But this is not the only necessity that attaches to the actions of free personality. Indeed, it is doubtful if any action of a free personality is purely contingent or empiric. No action that I can call "mine" is purely empiric, exclusively natural or completely the result of circumstances. It is *my* action and, as such, is personal, free, of myself. A man may make even natural death his own, by accepting willingly the demand of Nature. He may be willing to die—will his death. In such case, his death becomes his own, and he dies freely. His death ceases to be purely natural. To outward seeming, death willingly accepted and death to which there is no free personal submission may be very much alike; but, all the same, there is a difference between them. But where, as in the case of Jesus, death is not natural but violent, and the inevitable result of a course of life which in love and freedom He chose and maintained, then, in an even more pronounced sense, death is not simply

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empiric and the inevitable result of circumstances; it is, in such case, free personal action. If Jesus was willing to pay the cost of His obedience to His own and God's redeeming love, then it was no mere empiric necessity, no purely natural or social forces that slew Him. He died on the Cross of Calvary because he was Jesus, because He was Himself. His death was no victory of matter over spirit; no victory of force over personality: it was the reverse. It was the Spirit's victory, and the perfect assertion of personality. Jesus willingly paid the cost of His own redeeming love. He died freely. The ultimate necessity was not in others; it was in Himself.

In one very real sense the Cross was necessary, namely, in the sense that the Cross was and is absolute love, complete death to self. But the Cross, in this real, absolute sense, was not on Golgotha alone. It was in the heart and life of Jesus from the beginning to the end of His ministry. In every word of salvation, in every deed of compassion, in every appeal to the sinner, the Cross was present. His whole life was filled with the Cross, inevitably, because He was Jesus. The Cross was a continuous personal necessity to the man who lived "to save others but could not save Himself."

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But, it may be, there was yet another necessity and of another kind. If Jesus had not died, visibly on the Cross, a violent and shameful death at the hands of sinful men and for their sake, and even for the sake of those who actually slew Him, would His disciples have ever seen the Cross of Jesus in His life and heart, and ever known the height and depth of His love? And would we, with all our boasted moral culture and spiritual insight, have discerned these things? Could we have ever risen to the meaning of "The Cross"?

Perhaps Golgotha was necessary for our stupidities, as well as for our sins.

We have said that Jesus redeemed His disciples by the gift of Himself or through the communication of His personality, and now it is through the Cross and what the Cross implies that men are redeemed. These two positions are complementary. The Cross was the richest fruit of His personality and "by their fruits ye know them." It was, to change the figure, the mirror in which the personality was revealed. And the figure breaks down, for the Cross is no mirror but reality itself. The personality of Jesus is Christ crucified.

The Fourth Evangelist seems to have viewed the matter in this way. In his Gospel the

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Cross is the great hour of Jesus. And Paul interpreted Jesus through the Cross. Whether Jesus Himself thought of His Cross exactly in this way, we cannot be absolutely sure. To Him the Cross was God's Will and the price He was willing to pay for the ransom of many.

Jesus died His death to fulfil God's loving and redeeming will for the sinful.

VI. The Risen Redeemer

THE Resurrection of Jesus Christ is cardinal to the Christian Faith and Gospel. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain." Without a risen Redeemer, the whole life of the Church becomes a hopeless enigma and an empty delusion. Faith in a risen Redeemer was and is absolutely essential to the redeemed life.

When, however, we come to consider the narratives in the Gospels and in Paul in which this faith is expressed, we meet considerable difficulties. In the Gospels there are accounts of certain appearances of the Risen Lord to His disciples; there is also the story of the discovery of the empty tomb. In the accounts of the appearances there are two traditions, one associating them with Galilee and the other with Jerusalem. There is another feature of these accounts—the material or physical element in the Risen Christ is more strongly marked in some than in others. Thus, in Matthew's Gospel

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Jesus appears to the women in Jerusalem, then to the eleven disciples in Galilee, when He gives them the Great Commission, and assures them of His abiding presence. In Luke, on the other hand, Jesus does not simply appear to His disciples, He replies in advance to their possible criticism ; He possesses a physical body ; He appears and disappears, mysteriously, it is true ; but He eats, He carries the marks of His wounds, He is touched by the disciples who recognize the presence in Him of the very flesh and bones. In the Fourth Gospel we find the same markedly physical elements in the Risen Christ. "Then saith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side." There are of course physical elements (as there are spiritual elements) in all four accounts ; all four declare or, at least, imply (Mark) the Empty Tomb. But, none the less, it is true that the narratives of Matthew and Mark lay less stress on the physical nature of the Risen Christ than do those of Luke and John. Again, there are differences in the details, even when the narratives are treating of the same particular episode.

Now these differences in the stories of the empty tomb and the appearances—the two

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localities, Galilee and Jerusalem, the two presentations of the Risen Christ, one less, the other more physical, the divergent details of the same episode, simply cannot be reconciled into a unity of experience. All attempts to harmonize the narratives have proved futile.¹ But from the narratives as they stand we can draw the following conclusions :

- (i) The early disciples laid very little importance on consistency of detail ; a clear, consistent account of the external facts was a matter of secondary moment ; and, for that matter, the external facts themselves were not the main consideration.
- (ii) They believed that Jesus, their Master, was risen from the dead.

¹ The Appearances and the Empty Tomb might *prima facie* seem to be complementary. But Mark, our earliest Gospel, says that the women who made the discovery of the Empty Tomb told nothing of their discovery. From this we would judge that the story of the Empty Tomb did not play a large part, if any part at all, when the Faith in the Risen Christ was declared. In Matthew, after the women have discovered the Tomb empty and are bidden by the Angel to tell the disciples that Christ is risen from the dead and goeth before the disciples into Galilee where they will see him, *then Jesus Himself appears* to the women and gives them the same command. With regard to locality, the straits to which harmonizing exegesis is reduced may be judged from the fact that a Galilee, near to Jerusalem, had by some harmonizers to be discovered.

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- (iii) They believed that, risen from the dead, Jesus appeared to His disciples.
- (iv) They believed that the Tomb where He had been laid, was empty.
- (v) The form in which Christ rose from the dead may be best described by the term, Revivification.

Now, let us turn to Paul's account of the Resurrection. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter xv, the affirmation of the Resurrection of Christ is confirmed by an enumeration of certain appearances to individuals and to companies. The argument of Paul in the chapter runs in this wise—Christ is risen. The proof of that stupendous statement is, that “he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, after that of above five hundred brethren at once, then of James, then of all the Apostles and last of all of himself, as of one born out of due time.” We are not bound to conclude from Paul's words that these appearances exhaust all the appearances of Christ to believers, nor that of those which he mentions, all happened in the forty days before Pentecost, nor that the appearance to himself on the Damascus road was the last of all the appearances. He makes a selection, or, perhaps, adopts

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a selection commonly made in Christian teaching and preaching. He makes no mention of the empty tomb ; he may have known the story, but he does not connect the faith in the Risen Christ with the story, but with the fact of appearances, and we may assume that this was his method in declaring the truth of the Risen Christ.

Paul also establishes the truth of the Resurrection by an argument of another kind. " Christ rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." That is to say, he relates the Resurrection of Christ to the Providence of God ; he establishes its truth on the very name of God. This argument comes first in the chapter and may have been primary in Paul's thinking. However, we may say that he affirms the Resurrection of Christ and adduces proofs, one of a theological, the other of a pragmatic order. He is absolutely sure of his position and of his proofs.

Later in the chapter, Paul affirms the very closest relation between the resurrection of Jesus and that of all believers. The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of the resurrection of the faithful, Christ is the firstborn among the dead, the leader of the risen host. So close is the relation that we may apply what Paul says of resurrection in general to the resurrection of Jesus:

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The Risen Christ is then a spiritual being, not that He is pure spirit—Paul was too much of a Hebrew to say that—but He is a spiritual organism, with different attributes from those which belong to bodily or terrestrial organisms. There is a body terrestrial, corruptible, natural, weak, without honour ; there is a body celestial, immortal, glorious, powerful. The former is a living soul ; the latter is a quickening spirit, and has nothing in it of flesh and blood, which cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.

We have then, in Paul's account, a Risen Christ who has none of the terrestrial elements that we find in the Gospel narratives. The Risen Christ of Paul is not a revived Jesus, He is a glorified, spiritual Being living in God's Heaven, and yet personally identical with Jesus who was crucified, and whose body was laid in the grave. It is that risen, glorified Christ that appeared to the faithful. To distinguish Paul's conception from that of the Evangelists, we may say that the Evangelists' conception was one of revivification, Paul's one of glorification.

Can we relate the conception of Paul to that of the Evangelists ? Which conception was first and fundamental in the faith of the first believers ?

Paul's account is historically earlier than any

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of the Gospel narratives. That, however, in itself, does not establish the priority of his conception. But there are certain reasons which support this priority. Paul's account is spiritual, the evangelic accounts ascribe physical attributes to the Risen Christ. But none of the evangelic accounts fails to ascribe spiritual attributes as well to Christ. According to Matthew, the Risen Lord says to His disciples, "Lo, I am with you to the end of the world." In Luke, the spirituality of the Risen Christ is emphatically expressed in the story of the walk to Emmaus. John has the word "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." From this we may conclude that, from the first, the spiritual conception was present (though it may have been combined with physical elements) for we have no account of a *purely* physical presentation of the Risen Christ. The order may have been, then, from a semi-physical and semi-spiritual presentation of the Risen Christ to one simply spiritual and personal—first the natural, then the spiritual. That is an order which we find in experience. On the other hand, there is a tendency to concretize or materialize spiritual experience, to express our experience in concrete form and in physical terms. The early disciples would not be, any more than

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we, immune from that tendency. Certainly, an order which assumed that, at the first, there was a purely physical conception of the Risen Christ, then came Paul's spiritual conception, and later the semi-physical and semi-spiritual conception of the Gospels, would seem to deny all the laws of psychology. The argument so far would seem to be in favour of the priority of Paul's conception.

But the argument is not yet complete. The accounts of the appearances and the empty tomb, plainly had an apologetic purpose.

With regard to the appearances—those who were the subject of them narrated them, and we are expressly told that some doubted, they said it is a phantom, a mere spirit that had been seen. "No," said the believing, "it was no phantom—no mere spirit—but Jesus, our own Master in flesh and blood."

With regard to the empty tomb—the Jews said, "Yes; the tomb is empty, for you or your friends stole the body." "No," said the Christians, "neither we nor our friends stole the body, for the guard was too strict. But all the same, you are right, the tomb is empty. Christ is not dead; He is risen."

The appearances and the empty tomb had

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both an apologetic purpose. The apologetic may be weak, but the truth it defends may be sure. Apologetic, too, nearly always attempts to prove more than is needful. And, further, the truth comes before its apologetic. In the order of truth and reality, the Risen Christ came before the appearances and the empty tomb, and, most probably, He came first in the experience of the disciples.

And yet priority of conception is not the most important matter, but, if we may use the term, essentiality. And we may say that the essence of the faith in the Resurrection was faith in Jesus raised from the dead to the right hand of God. He was risen and living, and therefore He appeared personally and spiritually. He was risen and living, and therefore the grave was said to be empty.

This presentation of the case may be right or wrong ; it may be both right and wrong. It certainly does not solve all the difficulties, but at least it saves us from degrading the appearances and the empty tomb into a form of spiritualistic séance, and it leaves us with a worthy conception of our Risen Lord, a conception which makes Him victor over death and

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the grave, takes Him out of the limitations of natural existence, and raises Him to the heavenly places where He continues His redeeming work.

Further, this conception of the glorified Christ helps us to understand better both the appearances and the empty tomb. The disciples meet together in faith and love. They are thinking of their Friend and Master and of the wonderful change He has brought into their lives ; His very joy and peace are theirs ; He is not dead, He is living in their hearts. They take their meal and go over in memory the events of His last meal with them, re-enact that last meal, and, in the breaking of bread, they hear His voice, and see again in faith and love His form. He has appeared. They feel the Real Presence. They are assured again that He lives. He is not in the grave. "Do not, then, in sorrowing piety embalm the body ; do not live in the dead past, live in the real and living present. Turn not to an empty grave but to a glorified Redeemer." How could they express their experience ? How could they make plain that it was not an influence nor an emotion, nor the remembering of the past, but the Risen Lord Himself that had made their hearts burn within them ? How could they do this save in terms of flesh

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and blood? They had no fine philosophical distinctions; they could only tell in concrete terms their great experience.

Once we grant the faith in a risen and glorified Lord, it is fairly easy to understand the belief in appearances and the empty tomb. But the real faith was not in the latter but in a living Redeemer; it was in "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

After all, faith in a living, exalted and ever-present Redeemer is the great thing. Credulity is all that is needed to accept the accounts of the appearances and the empty tomb. But spiritual faith of a high order is needful to believe in an exalted, spiritual Redeemer. And in Him the disciples believed, and were as sure of Him as of their own souls.

How did this great faith arise?

Several factors probably contributed to the creation of this faith.

First, the disciples were not totally ignorant of the idea of resurrection in itself: they were not of those who denied resurrection.

Then (ii) there was the impression that Jesus, in the days of His flesh, had made upon their souls. He had given them Himself, and they had received, in part at least, the gift which was

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real and abiding. Before the idea of union with Christ rose to its fullest expression in Paul and John, the experience of that union had been going on in the lives of the disciples.

Again (iii) the disciples had been taught by Jesus Himself, that He was the Messiah, that He would die and rise again, that He would be seen seated on the right hand of God and coming upon the clouds of Heaven. In Matthew His exaltation, expressed in Apocalyptic terms, is presented as already begun—"From now ye shall see the Son of Man seated on the right hand of the Power." The disciples had been taught to associate the person of Jesus with the Kingdom of God present now but to appear soon in greater glory. Jesus was not, for the disciples, an ordinary man, but the Son of Man ordained of God to realize God's purpose of redemption by destroying the power of the Evil One and by establishing God's rule over the world. That Messianic faith is, in germ, the later Resurrection faith.

Next (iv) comes the Crucifixion and its bearing upon the question. The Crucifixion did not destroy faith in the Messiahship. The disciples had been warned of the Crucifixion and had been taught to relate the Cross to the Messiahship.

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But, in spite of warning, they were bewildered and profoundly distressed by the actual arrest. They took to flight. Peter denied his Lord. But these facts do not imply the complete destruction of the Messianic faith ; they imply fear. But in their fear, what did the disciples do ? Abandon their faith ? No ; they took their Bibles in their hands (Luke xxiv) and, under the guidance of the Spirit, they saw, in the Cross, the Will and Providence of God, they saw God Himself. And, may we not say that in the illumination that came, they saw that to die as Jesus had died was really not to die, that in the Cross there was love at its highest and divinest, love holy and redeeming, love mightier than death, God's own love ? Did they not know the highest when they saw it ? But the highest is immortal as God Himself.

And their faith, bewildered and crushed for the time, broke out again in a new lustre and glory. Jesus was the Messiah still ; nay, more, He was the Messiah publicly exalted to God's right hand. He was still with them, and He was with the Father, a mightier Redeemer than ever. "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die," does not express the whole of Christian resurrection. The Christian resurrection is exal-

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tation into the real and eternal life of God ; it is the passing of divine and personal life that has been lived on the human scale into the scale infinite and eternal.

This attempt to explain the origin of faith in the Risen Redeemer, on historical and psychological grounds, may be far from perfect and complete. But, at least, it traces faith in the Risen Lord to history and experience, and not to accounts of occasional experiences nor to the story of the empty tomb, nor even to these occasional experiences themselves, however profound in their feeling, nor to a physical fact however attested. The derivation of our Lord's resurrection and exaltation from the previous faith in His Messiahship does seem, in the best sense of the word, more rational and natural than from the appearances and the empty tomb. Difficulty, no doubt, remains; to the last, for the inquisitive mind, the empty tomb will be a difficulty.

Nor does the derivation from faith in the Messiahship, nor any derivation, completely establish the validity of faith in the risen Redeemer. For the validity of this faith we must lift our eyes to the Love and Providence of God Himself. If God's Love and Providence be such as we have learnt them to be in Jesus, then God could not

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suffer His Holy One to see corruption nor His beloved Son to die. And, if God's Love and Providence take thought for the need of sinful man, is it not an ever present, living, mighty Redeemer, and one like Jesus, nay, is it not Jesus Himself that the soul of man needs? And more, this faith in the living Redeemer was itself creative of new life, righteous and victorious, peaceful and joyous. This faith created real personality; could it and can it be less real than its own child?

VII. The Community Redeemed and Redeeming

RITSCHL strongly insisted that the Church, and not the individual, is the primary subject of redemption. He based this position on the analogy of the Old Testament, in which Israel, in His relations with God, is thought of as a whole or single entity, and also upon certain passages in the New Testament.¹ But against the passages which, on a literal interpretation, favour the Church, there are others which support "the individual." Above all, in favour of the individual as the primary subject of redemption, is the pronounced individualism of Jesus, and the supreme value which He placed upon the individual soul.

The question is, however, a somewhat arid one and easily solved on common-sense principles. The individual is redeemed not into spiritual isolation but into a community ; he is redeemed into brotherhood and brotherliness. And

¹ e.g., Acts xx. 28 ; 1 John ii. 2 ; iv. 10 ; 1 Peter iii. 18, etc.

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Christ is, at once, the Redeemer of the brotherhood and of each of the brothers that comprise it. None the less, the question raised by Ritschl may be made fruitful, as a *point d'appui*, for the consideration of the part which the Church or community plays in the process of redemption.

We have said that the first disciples were redeemed by the power of Christ's personality, or, if the words be preferred, by the effect of His Person and work upon them. But what of those who heard not and saw not for themselves—who belonged to the following generation or to the fifth or fiftieth generation after Christ? How was the redemption of the succeeding generations achieved? We may admit Christ's power over those who actually saw and heard Him, but would not that power tend to diminish as the generations came and went? Jesus Himself wrote nothing that has survived; the first brief biography did not appear till His own generation had almost passed away; and this, with the three later biographies, only records the words and events of perhaps forty days in all of His public ministry of, at least, over a year, that is, they all only give an account of about one-tenth of His whole ministry. But, even if the biographies had been far fuller than they are, and if they had

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appeared within a year or so of His death, they could never have had the same personal power as the actual, living presence.

We would expect, then, the power of Jesus gradually to fade away with the years, or, at least, to be at the mercy of men's memory and of the historians for its vital continuance. And that would have been the case, if Jesus Himself had been an ordinary man and had been regarded as such by His disciples. But, if He is not an ordinary man, and if in Him is the very Life and Spirit of God, communicating itself to men and so redeeming them, then, so far from His power decreasing with the passing of the years, it might increase from more to more. If Christ were the Life and Spirit of God coming into men's hearts, controlling them, giving to them a new personality in communion with God, then indeed the revelation of His power once communicated, and then, through the communication, repeated in all sorts and conditions of men, and in one generation after another, so far from diminishing would only deepen and expand. And there is no reason, why His immortal personality should not be as effective for us to-day as it was for those who heard and saw Him in the flesh. There may be the same, if not greater,

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blessedness for those who have not seen and yet have believed.

But it may be said, "Nineteen centuries ago, Christ was actual flesh and blood ; He was a man amongst men; to-day, He is invisible and intangible, He is a man no more. It is this invisibility and intangibility, along with the intervening years, that create doubt and uncertainty. If Christ in flesh and blood would only draw near to us !" But He does draw near to us in actual flesh and blood. His first approach to most, if not to all, of us is in that way. The Incarnation of the Redeeming Word did not end on Calvary. That Word is still communicated to us through a community that is flesh and blood—through men and women in whom Christ and His sacrificial love live, through whom He speaks and acts, who, themselves redeemed by Christ, have become redeeming. As a simple matter of fact, the Redeeming Life is given and chiefly maintained in us all by the continuous influence and power of the redeemed human life round about us ; and, however rich and direct may be our individual experience of Christ, if that communal life with which we are surrounded were to break down, if, through any imaginable reason, we were driven into severe

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spiritual isolation, our redeemed life would break down, perhaps cease altogether to exist.

It is sometimes thought in Protestant circles that it is through a Book—the Bible or the New Testament—that the redeemed life in the individual is first begun and chiefly maintained. No one would desire to depreciate the spiritual value of the New Testament, but the New Testament has power just because it is the expression of life which has been redeemed by Christ, and which, through its pages, is brought into living contact with the spirit of others. The Book transports us, as it were, into a community in which Christ reigns, and in which we are brought near to Christ Himself. But more powerful over our spirits than the community of the Book is the actual present community among whom, through grace, our way is cast.

It may be necessary at this point to say more definitely and frankly, what we mean. The idea of the redeemed community has become institutional and mechanical. We know the watchword that goes back 1,600 years, and is still heard to-day—*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, Outside the Church there is no salvation. The redeeming community is identified with a particular institution or with a particular priesthood. We

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resent the whole process and the pretentious claims that arise out of it. The redeemed community is not an institution made by the decrees and counsels of men ; it is made by the Living Spirit of Christ, and comprises every individual in whom that spirit truly lives. It is the river of redeemed life that flows down the ages, that may, here and there, dispart and make tiny and separate rivulets, but is all composed of the one water of Life. And the one part of that river that contributes most deeply to our redemption is the part whose living waters actually touch us and flow into us—it is that part of the redeemed community that lives around us in flesh and blood, whose human voice we hear and into whose eyes we look. We owe, it is true, an unspeakable debt to saints and heroes, to martyrs and apostles, but it is the men and women whom we actually know, and in whose flesh and blood the Crucified lives, that start our redeemed life and chiefly maintain it to the end.

Now here we have something that may help us to explain the fact that there are few that be redeemed. In saying that we are not emphasizing the often bemoaned fact of large masses of men and women outside the Church. There are, doubtless, these large masses, but perhaps

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among them there are not a few redeemed and redeeming personalities. But the fact is this, there are some men and women to-day who have not entered into Life. The seriousness of the situation does not lie in the numbers ; there may be many or there may be few ; so long as there is one that has not entered into Life, the seriousness of the situation remains. Why has that one not been redeemed ?

The fault may lie in the one—perhaps, most probably, it does. It will not receive Life. But it may be, that, to that one, the Redeeming Life has never drawn near in flesh and blood. It is the human voice and human touch of the Christ-filled life that the sinner needs for his redemption, indeed, that we all need, if we are to abide in Christ and Christ is to abide in us.

But flesh and blood are not only necessary for the sinner and his redemption ; they are necessary for Christ Himself, if His power of old time is to be efficacious to-day. It was not the Word that was powerful unto the saving of the soul nineteen hundred years ago ; it was the Word made Flesh. The Christ required flesh and blood then ; He requires them still to-day. It is through redeemed men and women, living in

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the flesh, that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

The community of the redeemed is, then, a necessity for Christ's redemptive work. Without the living community the continuance of the Redeemed Life would be impossible. If that is so, then the first and last duty of the Church, or of what is called organized Christianity, is, to be the actual flesh and blood of Christ in the world of to-day—to be His humanity crucified and risen again with Him, but still in the world of time, with the power of the spirit and of flesh and blood.

To say what we have said is no attempt to exalt the Church or the community at the expense of Christ Himself, or to sever the present from the past. To exalt the Redeemed Life can never be to degrade the Redeemer who created it. The redeemed and redeeming community only maintains itself by living in the one abiding Christ, and one of the most necessary methods by which it maintains itself is by ever returning to the Crucified and triumphant Jesus, the first-born among brethren, "the Chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely." However much the community may grow in Christ, Christ will stand everlastingly supreme.

Christ was the first-born among many brethren.

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Through Him, redeemed personality first appeared in the world. He stands at the head of a great host. That, in itself, gives to Christ an inalienable distinction. More, He stands at the apex of Israel's spiritual history, at the topmost height of a nation's development in God. Not that He is simply the glory of Israel individualized. He has a divine originality of His own. But, all the same, Christ is the last and choicest fruit of the Divine revelation that came through Israel. And that revelation in Christ is, confessedly, final. For He reveals a love that transcends all love—the love that forgives and redeems its enemy. He stands too with that Love before every age its Master and Lord ; the revelation of true life. To-day, when the heart of man is seething with new thoughts, seeking to explore new paths, following new ideals, when, in philosophy, science, literature and politics, there is said to be a new outlook arising, men instinctively turn to Jesus as holding the keys of the future. We need not ascribe to Him some unique, undiscoverable, metaphysical relation to reality or demand some unique, metaphysical element in His Person that separates Him from humanity, to maintain the supremacy of Jesus. For most of us, to defend Jesus by trying to

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establish the Crown rights of the Redeemer becomes something of an impertinence. Christ is everlastingly Lord and King and Jesus was the Christ. And He is, none the less, the Christ because He yesterday, to-day and for ever asks for flesh and blood, that He may redeem and rule the lives of men. And the flesh and blood that is redeemed through Him and becomes redeeming, will ever declare Him Lord of All.

To return to the Community. It is through the redeeming community that men are to-day redeemed. That community is no particular institution. Every man who consciously receives the Christ becomes a redeeming personality. But the community may not be limited to those who consciously live through Christ and who turn to Jesus for life and inspiration. There is such a thing as unconscious Christianity. There are men and women whose lives are good and pure and who may put the professing Christian to the blush. They are as salt and light in the world ; they help to keep society pure ; they save it from cynicism. In so far as their lives are Christian and can pass the great test, "By their fruits ye shall know them," they, no doubt, draw their moral inspiration, though they may know it not, from the stream of conscious Christianity

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that has flowed round about their path from youth up, and, ultimately, their goodness—the fruits—is due to Christ Himself. They are of the redeeming community. And there are some who are not within the historical or geographical confines of Christianity whose lives are not without elements of beauty and truth, but who worship not Christ nor the God of Christ, but the god or gods of their fathers. May not these be of the community, for are they not of those whom God has not left without His witness?

No doubt there is a vast difference between the conscious and the unconscious Christian, and a difference between both of them and him who, though he may have much virtue, names strange gods. Ultimately, however, whatever is of virtue or praise in any one of them, is due to Christ Himself who said, "He that is not against us is for us." But to know the source of Power and Life is strength, and it is they who are strong in Christ and know whence their strength comes that are the real power for the saving of men. Redeemed flesh and blood that knows the source of its redemption, is the world's need.

To analyse the relation of the Redeemer and the redeemed, and to apportion their parts in the redemptive work is not easy, perhaps not

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desirable. The Fourth Evangelist says, "The Redeemer is the vine and the redeemed are the branches." Both vine-stock and branch are necessary, each to the other, if there is to be fruit. And we naturally think, and perhaps most truly realize the relation through symbol or figure. We may think, quickly again, of the figure of the river. The river takes its rise in some lonely tarn or loch, encircled by the great hills from which the water streams down, till the river comes to the plain and broadens out; it winds its way through pleasant fields, and brings refreshing to the flowers that grow upon its banks ; here and there it may dispart and, in some lower reach, form again one stream ; it meanders past the hamlet, till, getting nearer to the sea, it skirts the town, and becomes to its folk a passage to the greater world, and then it becomes the wide, sweeping river that empties itself into the vast ocean. The loch is the loch ; the river is the river, but the water is one and the same. The Redeemer is the loch, among the everlasting hills of God—God's eternal reservoir of Life. The redeemed are the river of life that flows down the long ages of man. The Redeemer is the Redeemer ; the redeemed are the redeemed. But the Life in the Redeemer and redeemed is one and the same.

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And as the water in the river is gracious and beneficent, so is the One Life in Christ and His people, gracious, beneficent, healing and redeeming.

The River of Redeemed Life taking its rise in, and ever fed by the one Christ, it is the river that makes glad the city of God. But whither does it flow? What is the sea into which it empties itself? What—to leave the figure—is the end of the great redemptive process?

When we put this question to ourselves, there is probably a certain confusion of thought (which the figure just used and all such figures tend to create), a confusion that is due to the fact that we are thinking of the Redeemed Life exclusively in terms of time. The very idea of redemption, conceived as “progressing” through the ages, seems to imply a point of time when the process will be complete, and, as a progressive process, come to an end. But while we think of redemption progressing, we also think and speak of it as perfect and complete. In the New Testament we find both these aspects represented. In such passages Romans vi. 10, Hebrews vii. 27, ix. 12, x. 10, redemption is presented as final and perfect; in other passages such as Col. i. 24, 1 Peter (passim) it is presented as

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progressive. Can we relate or reconcile the two aspects ?

In a historical sense, Christ's work is final. He died once for all. That death, with all its meaning, is never repeated. And this finality, a finality appearing in historical conditions and in time, belongs to every historical event and to every person in time. They are, each and all, final and complete. God never repeats Himself. But we think of Christ and His redeemed, each one of them final and unique *per se* in a historical continuum, coming one after another in time, and so we come to regard the redemptive reality as progressing or progressive, though the word, without qualification, is not quite accurate. Paul is no progress on Christ Himself. Nor did Paul, strictly, progress from his experience on the Damascus road. He never got beyond Christ. There is a real sense in which Christ is finality, and each one of His redeemed has reached finality ; the finality already exists, even though, in each case, it appears historically or in time.

Further, the finality of Christ's redemptive work may be regarded in another aspect. The revelation of forgiving and redeeming love in Christ is final and complete. No Christ of God could be and do more than Jesus was and did.

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He gave His life for sinful men. He revealed God's inmost heart of love. And to every redeemed life that revelation is given : the redeemed have received the last word of God. They have found reality, and reality has found them ; they live in the final reality of God. Does the redeemed life then not progress ? It progresses (if the word is admissible) into that reality which belongs to it already ; it progresses not through time or even in time, but through and in the eternal redeeming Christ of God, or, may we say, in and through God Himself, the one ever-present and abiding reality.

Is there then no one far-off divine event to which the whole redemption moves ? Can redemption (or Creation) ever end in an event in time ? If it did, what next ? Would redemption cease ? Would the redeeming work of God be finished ? Redemption does not end in time or time's events, even though it may be said to appear in time ; it ends where it begins, in the eternal, ever-redeeming Love of God. The redeemed are in time but not of time, and should time cease to be, they will live the redeemed and redeeming life of God.

It is the figure of the river and our time-bound thinking that has led to this digression.

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Final redemption is not far off ; the eschatologists are right ; it is near us ; it may be in our very selves ; we may be now finally redeemed. And yet we are children, living in time and in the flesh, and easily fall into mistaken bondage to both ; we are easily depressed to an earth of events and of things ; when we are, let us lay hold of the final, perfect love of God in Christ which makes us masters of time and of the flesh, and then the divine event will be very real and near.

The redeemed community is God's final reality in the world of sense and time.

VIII. The Redeeming God

WE have come to this position, that there is a redeemed and redeeming community in the world, men and women in whom the very life of Christ lives, a community in which Jesus is the historic source, and in which He is Lord. That community is a historic fact : its experience of redemption is real in this world.

The question now is, Does this community with its experience postulate anything beyond itself ? Does it postulate God as the ultimate ground and source of the community and of its experience ?

The question at this point may seem otiose ; for, from the first, in considering sin, repentance and forgiveness, that is, in trying to trace the redemptive process, God has been the great implication without which the whole process would become meaningless. We simply cannot consider sin seriously without coming, sooner or later, face to face with the idea of God. But, none the less, special consideration of the question may not be without value ; not perhaps in the

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way of theistic proof, but rather in bringing home to us the kind of God that is revealed in the experience of redemption. God approaches us sinners to redeem us, but through this approach we return again to God, and find Him perhaps other and more wonderful than we had known.

Now the redeemed community has in it a unity of life or being ; each and all of the redeemed and redeeming personalities are related to one another, and in such a way that they can be thought of as a single unity. Again, each of the redeemed personalities has a personal end, and all have the same end. There is then in the community, a unity of being and a unity of personal end or purpose, which implies that the community, each and all, rests upon Being for which these unities consciously exist, and through which they are historically created.

This may seem somewhat abstract, and the Being that makes the community one, each with the other in the relation of being and purpose, may be judged as very formal, scarce deserving the name of God. But we can go further. The community is not self-originated ; it implies a Creator. One of the deepest feelings in all religious experience, and not least in the Christian experience of redemption, is the feeling of

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dependence. It is God that has made us and redeemed us, and not we ourselves. We have noticed, more than once, how quickly experience of redemption passes into the idea of predestination—into the thought that God is everything and man is nothing. There are, of course, some pluralistic philosophers who have no need of a Creating God as the ground and source of all personal experience. All they require for the explanation of experience is a vast number of entities possessing, in and through themselves, sufficient personal potentiality. But the assumption of innumerable entities with personal potentiality seems quite as great an assumption as that of one Creator upon whom all the personal entities depend for life ; certainly the one assumption is as difficult of ultimate explanation as the other. The pluralist, however, fails entirely to explain the feeling of dependence native to the religious mind. We are not independent entities, but very much the reverse in all our experience. If we do not trust this feeling of dependence, there is nothing that we can trust in our conscious life, and from what it says to us we are bound to believe that our experience of redemption is created or has a Creator.

The idea of creation is, no doubt, a difficult

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one, for man has no experience of creation in the true sense. We may speak of a watchmaker making watches or of a cabinet-maker making cabinets, but their "making" is not creation; it is only the combination of combinable things, already created. Perhaps the best human analogy is that of an artist. In his art—painting, sculpture or poetry—the artist expresses himself; he puts himself into his art which becomes the embodiment of himself. His work is his own creation. But the artist is not an instance of ultimate, creative energy, for he himself is created. However, in some such way we may conceive the creative act or idea, and, probably, the analogy is as true as we shall get of the creative agency of God. God's creation is His eternal self-expression or self-giving; in Creation God creates Himself. And, in that part of Creation which we call redemption, God is creating His Redeeming Self, giving that Redeeming Self in love and sacrifice to those personalities that receive Him, and who thus are created, redeemed and redeeming. That is to say, redemption is God Himself, and in redemption we find God loving, sacrificing and creative of true personality. The redeeming love that lives in the community and makes it what it is with all its sacrifice

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and death to self, with the joy of love's realization of itself and victory over everything else—all that is God's creation and His self-expression; it is indeed God Himself. God is Love.

It may perhaps be said that this conception of God revealed in the redemptive process is purely subjective or immanent, and that the divine transcendence is ignored. It is perfectly true that in the redeemed community God is immanent, and it is His immanence that makes the redeemed life. But immanence does not negate transcendence. God's transcendence does not lie in remoteness nor even in sublimity, but in personal power to effect His own gracious purposes, in His personal sufficiency for every actual and possible situation. As such, transcendence is not opposed to immanence. God is transcendent in His immanence; He is all-sufficient in the life of the redeemed. An immanence that had not transcendence would be of no value, and the transcendence that was not immanent, would be ineffective. The two terms "immanent" and "transcendent" are complementary. God, immanent in the redeemed life, is transcendent: He is powerful unto the redemption of the sinful person. The Redeem-

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ing God, then, in the redeemed community is immanent and transcendent.

Nor again must we equate the experience of the redeemed community with the redeeming God Himself, as though He had no life for Himself, but only in so far as it has been revealed in the redeemed. The redeemed community never believes that itself is the Absolute God. (It has left that fancy to Hegel and his kith and kin, to the philosophical absolutists, though, I imagine, Lotze has successfully pricked that fanciful bubble where the necessary sense of humour was lacking.) Such an equation of the redeemed community with God fails to explain the community as it actually is ; fails to account for it at any and every particular moment of its appearance ; and also fails to provide for its growth in grace, for further and more complete appearance of reality ; that is, it fails to provide for the community's continuance and maintenance ; it makes impossible any further advance in the realms of reality. Christ Himself said, "The Father is greater than I," and the heart of the Father is ever greater than the heart of the whole redeemed community. God has the power of eternal revelation or self-creation ; reality has an endless energy of appearance.

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The redeemed community find in their redemption a redeeming God—a God who forgives all their iniquities, heals their diseases, redeems their life from destruction and crowns it with lovingkindness and tender mercies. The redeemed do not need to think out this God ; they find Him inevitably in their experience of redemption, which would be, without such a God, simply inexplicable.

But is this God of Love whom the redeemed sons of men worship, the one and only true God ? To use philosophical language, Is He the Absolute ? Now the God of Redeeming Love is an immediate and inevitable inference from the experience of redemption, but redemption does not comprise the whole of man's experience. For instance, man has knowledge of material facts of the world round about him ; as a scientist he knows material facts in their relation and apparent unity. From this knowledge he infers a truth in which all material facts live and move and have their being—a truth which stands very much in the same relation to facts and man's knowledge of them as the God of Love stands to the experience of man's redemption. Again, there is something more than truth in things : there is beauty whose presence

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the artist feels most intensely, though we of commoner mould may not be altogether insensible of it. There is music and colour and charm in things, the beauty which the artist feels and worships. Is this trinity of love, truth and beauty one God? Or are there three Gods, the God of the scientist, the God of the artist, and the God of the redeemed? Or, for that matter, as many gods as man may immediately infer from his manifold and rich experience, and then exalt to his Pantheon?

Now, the redeemed man, as a rule, has not simply an experience or knowledge of redemption; he knows or has some experience of the facts of truth; nor is he without feeling for things beautiful. But his personality, though manifold in this way, is not divided. The redeemed may be both artist and scientist, and yet he remains one personality in which the unifying principle, in all probability, is Love. There may be, it is true, facts in his knowledge or experience which seem to be alien to his general thought or irreconcilable with his experience—elements that disturb the unity of life; but as love is added more and more to knowledge, these elements tend to disappear or to be co-ordinated with the main stuff of personality and life; and

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even if some facts remain stubborn and intractable, Love gives the conviction that they can and will be reconciled in personality in which love reigns. In a word, knowledge lives with love in one personality. The same might be said of the æsthetic feelings, of man's experience of beauty.

May we not then infer that the unity of love, truth and beauty which finds place, more or less perfectly, in man's personality finds place and exists eternally in the eternal mind of God?

Further, the higher values of experience subsume or contain the lower. There is nothing of higher value than an act of sacrificial love—the Cross is the supreme value, but is there not truth in the Cross—the truth that pervades all things, and does it not breathe the spirit of universal beauty? And so, in God's act of supremest value, in His act of redemption, there is not only love, there is truth and beauty. The God of Redeeming Love is true and the God of Truth: He is beautiful and the God of Beauty. The God of Redemption is the God of Truth and Beauty, and if there be any other virtue or praise, He is the God of these. The God that is revealed in Christ Crucified is the only true God, Infinite and Absolute.

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But there is one part of human experience which is difficult to reconcile with a God of love, truth and beauty—with the one true God, and that is our experience of sin with its misery and death. Here we have, of course, the old baffling problem of moral evil. The common theistic solution runs something like this : God does not sin; He cannot, being what He is; but He has created personalities with moral freedom and with freedom of choice which implies the possibility of sinning. When this possibility becomes an actuality, God is in no wise the author, nor can He be at all blamed. The responsibility lies with the sinner who is morally free. The utmost share that God has in the sinning is, that He gives it a kind of permission. God has made man free and has “permitted ” his sinning. Such a solution aims at saving the righteousness of God by fixing the responsibility of sin on the free agency of man. But it is doubtful if such a solution can satisfy even those who may use it. Do we really save God from all complicity in sin by saying that He “only permits” it? Again, is it quite fair to fix in this way the whole responsibility upon man? He did not ask to be a created and free agent with the burden of tremendous moral possibility.

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And, is man a free agent absolutely? Is not his freedom limited? Is not the dice loaded, often heavily on the side of evil? The weak points in the solution are patent. With a show of frankness, they are often admitted. In the last resort, it is sometimes said God is responsible for man's sinning, but man himself is still the immediate cause. The solution, with all the necessary apologies for its weak points, gives little satisfaction.

Now I imagine—without any pretence of solving the baffling mystery—that much of the dissatisfaction which is felt in certain popular solutions of the problem of sin, is due to the fact that, in taking up this problem, we abandon the conception of God that is given to us in and through redemption, and, by so doing, add difficulty to the problem.

For instance, if we conceive of God as a kind of Omnipotent Benevolence, then the fact and experience of sin become hopelessly unsolvable. If God is Omnipotent Benevolence, He could not allow or permit sin; He could not, we imagine, create personalities that ran the slightest possibility of sin and sin's misery. He could only create a world that would be a "felicific institution" whose denizens were inevitably happy

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and where everything was always delightful. He could not possibly create such a world as we know exists, with its sin and misery. If God is Omnipotent Benevolence or Benevolent Omnipotence, sin is a hopeless enigma and no solution, satisfying in any way, seems possible.

Again, the problem does not become any easier, if the conception of God is that of absolute righteousness, of nothing but righteousness. A God only righteous—a God in whom the attribute of righteousness was supreme and dominant—could not create sinful beings nor, we would think, beings who were almost certain to sin, or who even might possibly sin. A God only righteous could create beings only and exclusively righteous—beings for whom sin was as impossible as for Himself. The existence of a sinful personality seems a contradiction of a God whose dominant attribute is Righteousness.

But with a God of Redeeming Love, not permitting sin (the phrase “God permits sin” has something morally repulsive about it), but fighting it in the life of the sinner, bearing the sinner’s burden with him and leading the sinner out of sin with its misery and death into life and joy, the irreconcilable contradiction seems to fade away. This is not saying that the baffling

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problem is ultimately and completely solved. Mystery still remains. Why things are at all, and why they are as they are—that mystery still abides. But we are not left dissatisfied with God and His ways with man. We can love and worship a God of Redeeming Love and we can even say of His world, "It is the best of all possible worlds"—for it is a world where man learns the meaning of repentance and forgiveness, of re-creation and redemption, a world in which through the fight against sin—God's fight and ours—we become truly sons of God, ourselves redeemed and redeeming. If there is a better world, it is one whose foundations and structure are identical with those of this world, a world in which the Redeeming God still lives and builds the city in Love, Truth and Beauty, a world to which God can eternally reveal His love and grace and in which man can eternally receive them—that is the best of all possible worlds.

God does not commit sin; He does not allow it; He does not permit it. He wars against it unto blood. Nor is it possible for man to commit sin, or even to permit it, that grace may abound. When man sins or permits sins, it is the Devil, in some shape or form, that abounds. To sin

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is to shut out grace, to close the gates against its coming. Grace abounds when we repent, when we do righteously, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

A God of Redeeming Love is the God that the sinner finds in his redemption. He is the only true God. He is the God of Love, Truth and Beauty, the One Universal God. Such is the God of the redeemed and redeeming community.

And now unto Him that is able to guard us from stumbling and to set us before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ Our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen.

Epilogue

I write these words in a small garden where the flowers are aglow in their luxuriant, summer beauty, and as I look upon them I feel there is in them a friendly spirit, as though they were offering me their beauty to enjoy and make my own. Not in these do I feel the presence of *La Belle Dame sans Merci*; they are too kindly and generous, too forgiving in their self-giving. And not far away there are a woman and a child, in whose eyes the Eternal Love has found dwelling, and through those eyes that Love will smile upon me, bidding me too to smile and to rejoice alway, to be forgiven and live in the kindliness of the Eternal God. And to-morrow and the next day there will be the call of duties, simple enough, but, if faithfully done, they may bring my fellows nearer to me and me nearer to them, and both of us nearer to God. And, if in the hearing of this human call, weakness and memory may make me falter and doubt my worth and privilege, then, please God, I shall hear another

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human voice coming out of the past, yet very near and saying to me, "Arise, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go in peace and sin no more. And lo ! I am with you to the end of the world."

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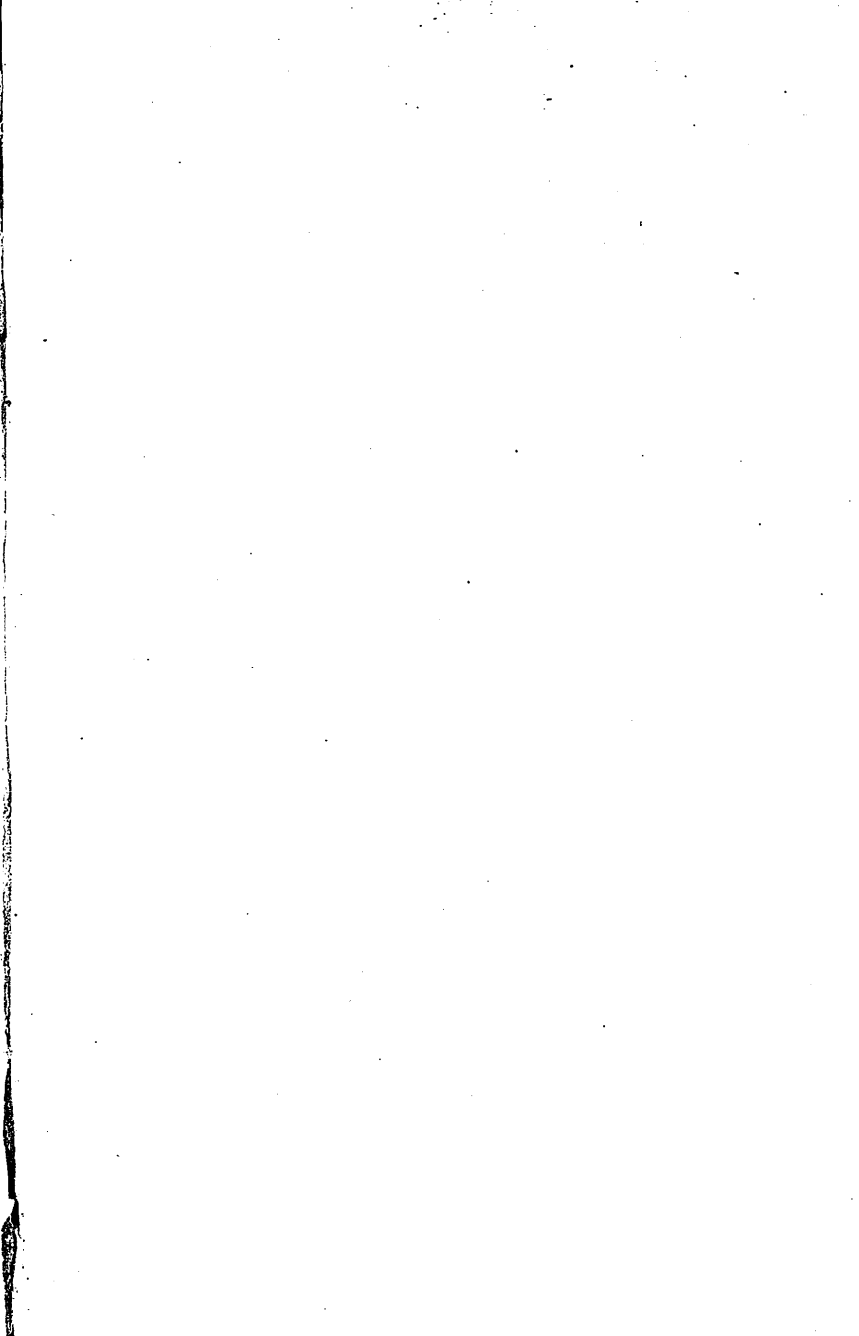
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